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Non-institutional Political Participation

A Case Study of Chinese Peasants During the Transformation Period

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Foreword

In as early as March 1979, Deng Xiaoping stated that not enough research had been done on political science, law, sociology, and world politics in China. Today, we find that studies of law, sociology, and world politics based on China's national conditions have been developing rapidly, whereas localization and sinicization of political science still needs more work.

Jiangshan Fang received his Ph.D. degree in political science last year, and this book is his doctoral dissertation. Mr. Fang was a classical philology major in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University during his undergraduate studies. Inspired by his full-time job after graduation, he gradually became interested in politics for further study. Later, when he finally decided to pursue his Ph.D. degree in political science at Peking University, he came to ask me for advice. Although I encouraged him to do it, I felt it would be difficult for him to juggle work and study, because he had a very busy job that needed him to often work overtime, attend meetings, and go on business trips. Would he manage the heavy course load and finally produce a quality doctoral dissertation? So I told him frankly, "Pursuing a doctoral degree is good, but if you fail to balance, you might risk underperforming in both your work and research."

When I said "underperformance," I was not very optimistic. I meant that his research might affect his work and vice versa. However, as a result of Mr. Fang's hard work, he later proved that his job and research could be mutually beneficial to each other. The quality of this dissertation can be greatly attributed to his field study as well as his contemplation and in-depth exploration into political issues.

I was much impressed by the defense of his dissertation. I remember that his session started at 2 p.m. and lasted for over 4 h. But even then, the examination committee still did not want it to end. The comments of the committee indicated their great interests in this dissertation, which was innovative and down to earth, thus thought-provoking. Certainly, its academic value was also commended by committee members. For example, the author's doctoral advisor Professor Xiao Chaoran commented, "The author gave a reasonable analysis with a broad prospective, cleverly avoiding certain clichés while proposing new ideas. In general, this paper, which, centered on an unusual topic, presents many original insights in

carefully chosen words, is an outstanding doctoral dissertation." Researcher Shao Daosheng concluded that "Jiangshan Fang's paper has the following four distinctive characteristics: the research subject is unique and well-chosen; the subject studied is important and highly enlightening both in theory and in the real world; the solutions proposed are feasible; in methodology, the author used Marxism as the guiding principle and took into account China's unique national conditions, i.e. Chinese characteristics, based on the reality and first-hand sources…."

Professor Ning Sao even noted, "The dissertation realizes the unity of history and logic and boasts many doctrinal innovations. Different from conventional dichotomous classification of legal and illegal participation, it puts forward the concept of 'non-institutional political participation,' and brings a new perspective on the observation and studies of political participation, political restructuring and the establishment of democratic political system for China and other developing countries in transition."

Although I do not specialize in political science, I was also invited to Mr. Fang's dissertation defense. I agree with other experts' comments and also have my own views which match my knowledge of the author in everyday life. First of all, Mr. Fang never stops learning Deng Xiaoping Theory and firmly believes in the leadership of the Communist Party of China and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, he could keep an open mind and seek truth from facts in his research work. The author has achieved significant results in integrating theory with practice in this paper thanks to his keen observation, bold exploration of the reality, and his efforts to solve real-world problems. Secondly, the author has a good knowledge of rural areas and peasants. Therefore, he is concerned with and passionate about the modernization of rural areas. The *Decision* passed at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 15th CPC Central Committee noted, "The issues of agriculture, rural areas and peasants are crucial to reform and opening up and the big picture of modernization… Being on top of these key issues means gaining the initiative to master the overall situation." Jiangshan Fang fully understands these words, as can be often seen from our conversations. Thus, he was motivated by his deep understanding of and warm feelings toward rural areas and peasants to write this dissertation. In addition to achieving academic excellence, he also tries to do his utmost to solve everyday problems for the development of rural areas, as made evident in this paper. Thirdly, Jiangshan Fang's undergraduate training in classical philology and immersion in traditional Chinese culture has greatly influence on him, which is probably why the concept "Chinese characteristics" seems especially ingrained in his mind. Guided by Marxist theory and closely related to the reality of rural China, when quoting new foreign theories in this dissertation, he did not merely copy and paste, but made full use of them to solve real problems in China. Therefore, this dissertation indeed has made good and in-depth attempts at the sinicization and localization of political science and is significant both in academia and in the real world.

I am delighted that Jiangshan Fang's doctoral dissertation is to be published. I always consider it a shame that the dissertations of many Ph.D. students, which take a great deal of time and hard work to write, are merely put away after being

approved, without bringing any benefit to society. During Mr. Fang's dissertation defense, as a Democratic Party member, I could not help but think that this paper offers great advice to the government and insights on state affairs. Now this dissertation is to be published and reviewed by the public, which will not only enable it to make itself useful, but also facilitate Mr. Fang's future research on political science.

November 1999 Kaicheng Jin

Preface

Author's Introduction to the English Edition

My doctoral dissertation *An Analysis of Non-Institutional Political Participation of Chinese Peasants During the Transformation Period* written at the end of 1998 was first published in Chinese under the title of *Non-Institutional Political Participation—A Case Study of Chinese Peasants during the Transformation Period* 15 years ago in 2000 after its oral defense was completed.

During the past 15 years, despite the fact that the book received positive response both in and outside the academia and was highly cited, which greatly encouraged me, I have remained modestly aware that modernization, institutional changes, transformation period, peasants (Chinese peasants), political participation and reforms of governance (the decentralization of social governing power) were all hot topics easily arousing public interest in China over the past 20 years or so. What I have done is simply, by using the opportunity of working on my doctoral thesis, to propose the concept of "non-institutional political participation" with its analytical framework and conduct a comprehensive research on these topics.

The past 15 years have witnessed great changes not only in Chinese society, but also in research subjects and methodologies in social sciences. It was out of my expectation when I learned from my academia friends that this book had also influenced researches in a range of related areas including sociology, law, and history, and even the emerging Internet studies. After I was told that the international publisher Springer was planning to publish an English edition of this book as a classic on Chinese political science, I started reading through this book from the perspective of a reader. After all, reading a book as the author and as a reader inevitably renders different expectations and emotional feelings.

From the author's perspective, the expectation is that what is written needs to be put into use, and what is used needs to fit appropriate practical conditions. Every scholar hopes that his/her studies are recognized and put into practical use, and used appropriately, creating a good unity of learning, practice, and reality. When I was writing my doctoral thesis, I was not sure whether my rationality in

discussing the old yet realistic, complicated, and sensitive issues of Chinese rural areas and peasants would be affected by my personal attachment toward the countryside and peasants. This question has now been satisfactorily answered by the positive comments my work has received since its publication—I am pleased that my work has proved to be a rational study inspired by emotions.

From a reader's perspective, however, one believes that truth is simple, as advocated by traditional Chinese philosophers, which simply means that even profound truth can be interpreted in simple words. This belief also largely coincides with the laudation of the beauty of simplicity and concision in modern theoretical studies including social science studies. This does not mean, of course, that simplicity is all that matters in discussing social theories. It is also essential to describe and discuss the nature of human behavior. Pursuing simplicity and conciseness does not exclude provision of accurate, specific, and sometimes detailed descriptions of empirical phenomena. As a matter of fact, abstract conceptualization of theories does not work without concrete and accurate description of empirical phenomena.

Abstract conceptualization of theories and accurate description of empirical phenomena both need to be supported by generally meaningful concepts. In social science studies, a series of key concepts have inspired different perspectives and approaches for examining social reality, and regulated applicable methodologies and procedures of research. Precise and normative concepts provide a foundation for the formation of academic systems, and important tools for analyzing many empirical phenomena in daily life. These are all major tasks for social scientists. In social science research, the proposal and verification of a concept is also beneficial to accomplishing tasks and objectives in other aspects. In other words, social science studies involve many other tasks and objectives, such as nurturing new thinking models and reforming old models, and exploring and innovating methodologies. Outstanding social science studies show a high level of consistency toward all these tasks and objectives.

When I was writing this introduction, the song *You Raise Me Up* in the form of chorus and piano renditions keeps ringing around me. It arouses my inner feeling of gratitude—my heartfelt thanks go to everyone, wherever you are, who has generously encouraged me throughout the process and, in particular, to you who are reading this book—with you I feel greatly honored to communicate, and from you I appreciate all comments and feedbacks you may have.

August 2015 Jiangshan Fang

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Chapter 1
Introduction: A Brief Review of the Theme

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee marked the beginning of China's transformation from a traditional and planned economy to a modern socialist market economy. The 14th National Congress of the CPC established a socialist market economy system, leading the nation into a new era for China's social transformation. The 15th National Congress of the CPC developed the cross-century development strategy for China's reform and opening up and the socialist modernization, and proposed the program of action for China's social, economic, political, and cultural development in the new century, indicating a new critical period for China's social transformation. The three events mentioned above represent three milestones during China' continuous social transformation aimed at accelerating China's modernization process.

Agriculture, rural areas, and peasants have been the fundamental issues for China's revolution and socialist construction, among which the issue of peasants should be of top priority. Academic and political circles have a consensus that peasants are the predominant issue for China's modernization. China's comprehensive reform was kicked off by peasants in the rural areas after the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee. The highlights of rural reform include implementing a two-tier economic management structure based on contract management by household, combining centralization with decentralization, and adopting a system of community-based self-governance featuring peasants' self-management, self-service, and self-education. The comprehensive reform pioneered by peasants has propelled Chinese society into the era of comprehensive transformation and brought enormous and profound changes to the structures of social, economic, and cultural systems and political activities in contemporary China, especially in the rural areas.

Initiated by peasants, this comprehensive reform has helped China achieve many successes in modernization. However, along with modernization come heterogeneous effects that take the form of emerging tension and power in politics.

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The accelerating social transformation has enhanced the new tension and the new power. Public aspiration and demand for political participation has kept rising with the continuing expansion of participation channels, which is conducive to the establishment and further improvement of a public political participation institution. Meanwhile, non-institutional political participation is also expanding. The existing practices show that political participation of the general public proves to be an important alternative to resolving the social, economic, and political conflicts arising from the modernization process. As the modernization process in China accelerates, the study of relationships between the social and economic modernization and the political participation has become increasingly important. This paper provides some theoretical analyses of the non-institutional political participation by Chinese peasants. Similar to studies summarizing and promoting the experiences in institutional political participation, the studies concerning non-institutional political participation of Chinese peasants have a profound and realistic impact on China's efforts to achieve steady social transformation and sustainable social development, especially the goal of building a "well-off, democratic, and civilized" socialist countryside. These studies on the two kinds of political participation differ only in research perspectives and aim to answer the same question.

1.1 Origin of the Theme

The study of China's modernization should start from the issues of peasants. Therefore, the author has long been concerned about the political participation of peasants during the transformation period in China. In an attempt to analyze this issue, the author has put forward six questions that need to be answered as follows: (i) As social transformation has greatly changed people's modes of production and life, how does it affect China's rural social stratification? (ii) During the transformation process, what is the major functional mechanism? (iii) Under this mechanism, who will acquire a dominant role in the rural society during the social transformation? (iv) What are the characteristics of the changes in rural society, politics, economy, and culture during the transformation period? (v) How and through what paths does peasants' social status change during the transformation period? (vi) What roles does the political participation of peasants play in social transformation? What features does it have?

The extensive practices of socialist democracy carried out by Chinese peasants on their own land have stimulated their political passion and sense of participation to an unprecedentedly high level, raising the political literacy and the capacity in political participation of the rural population and facilitating the rural modernization. "The villagers committee is directly elected by villagers. Many villages have held four elections with an increasingly higher turnout rate. Currently, the turnout rates in most villages stand above 90 %, and the number in villages of some advanced counties and cities reaches as high as 96 %. Not only have young people

taken an active part in election, but elders and housewives have also shown great enthusiasm. On the election day, even some who work or do business away from home come back to vote."[1] These refreshing practices have caught attention of political and academic circles at home and abroad. However, the adjustment of interest pattern and the change of control mode in rural areas during the transformation period have given birth to new tensions in the countryside, while the non-institutional political participation of peasants has been growing in recent years. The existing academic studies on peasants' political participation are far from enough compared to the complexity and importance of the issue. Few studies have been conducted in this field, while those concerning studies seldom focus on the non-institutional political participation. Despite the fact that many peasants have participated in politics non-institutionally, most of the studies are only concerned with the institutional political participation and have overlooked the non-institutional political participation. In this connection, the study presented in this book is more relevant than ever to the introduction of non-institutional participation into institutional frameworks and the sound development of political democracy.

1.2 Reflections on Methodology

When deciding the theme of this paper, the author has made some reflections on the methodology of the present study. "For historians, sources never explain themselves. For social scientists, there is no such data that can explain themselves either. Data needs to be interpreted. Because people have different understandings of social truths based on their own experiences, it is the task of theory and methodology to achieve the highest possible truthfulness instead of creating the truth."[2]

Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping all gave their profound and unique insights into rural issues regarding small farmers, land, cooperative system, collectivization, policies, rural reform, rural development, the peasant class, etc., which are all very useful in guiding the author's study. This book is grounded in these insights, and the methodology of this study is also based on the approaches adopted by those thinkers. The great politician Mao Zedong, in particular, always considered peasants as a sociopolitical group and looked into rural issues on this basis, which enabled him to take initiative in political movements and to gain the leadership role in the revolution, reform, and socialist construction. Likewise, it is also the basic premise of this book to consider peasants as a sociopolitical group in analyzing their political participation.

The author has spent nearly three years in collecting and organizing information on typical cases of peasants' non-institutional political participation during China's transformation period. All the sources in this book are collected from

[1] Yan and Hai (1997).

[2] Atteslander (1995, 1).

(i) research by the author, (ii) research by organizations, (iii) commissioned research, or (iv) communications through work and compilation of others' research materials. Sources and information collected by these means are crucial in analyzing the theme. Therefore, positive methodology using the empirical method is frequently used in this study.

The positive methodology is designed to deal with issues based on the actual situation, starting from a general understanding of the situation, through analyzing the issues, and then coming to a conclusion. This methodology requires a truthful description of the social facts in question for the sake of a truthful revelation. But describing truthfully is never easy as involves many difficulties, including: (i) Truthful description needs adequate theories that can act as guidance; otherwise, it will be hard to differentiate true sources from the mixed collection; (ii) truthful description sometimes harms the interests of certain social classes, organizations, and local authorities and thus may incur danger to the researcher and informants. For instance, when the author commissioned certain researches and collected information from others, the persons concerned repeatedly asked the author to conceal the names of specific places or departments. (iii) It is important to have sufficient courage both theoretically and politically because courage is the basis of truthful description.

The reality-based methodology involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The positive methodology is employed to address the conflicts between the objective and reality. It includes the following steps: first, an accurate description of the facts in question; second, identification of the factors, especially the major ones, causing the problem; third, an analysis of the respective roles and impacts of these factors, as well as their interactions; fourth, an investigation of the specific causes, contexts, and background of these factors; fifth, based on the four steps mentioned above, analyze possible changes in these factors when situation progresses, which enables us to identify counteractive measures against these factors that can ensure the reaching of the objective; and sixth, combining positive methodology with normative methodology to propose targets. Using these six steps, facts can be clearly explained, or a general rule may be deduced to be further abstracted into a theory. This book follows these steps of the process in general.

On the macro-level, the Chinese government has provided sufficient and unobstructed institutional channels for peasants to participate in political affairs. On the meso-level, the theoretically unobstructed institutional political participation suffers various obstacles, which in many cases forces peasants to resort to non-institutional channels. Thus, the analysis of the non-institutional participation of peasants in China is essentially targeted at the meso-level, focusing primarily on several typical cases that have occurred during the recent years, instead of micro-level personal factors of the individuals such as education, social experience, seniority in the family, age, marital status, competence, and political status. An analysis of typical cases indicates that social contexts at the meso-level have particularly strong influences on the non-institutional political participation of Chinese peasants. They include family, self-governing organizations, as well as

economic, religious, political, and social organizations, and special relationships such as interest-based relationships. In fact, the general characteristics of the political participation of peasants are often most clearly reflected at the meso-level. Therefore, this book adopts a meso-level perspective to reveal the nature of the political participation of peasants.

The transformation theory and the institutional analysis approach are adopted in the book as its major theoretical tools to analyze non-institutional political participation of peasants during the transformation period. It should also be noted that previous studies focused solely on the analysis of behaviors of political participation subject (citizens), while neglecting the role of the government. In fact, public political participation is a political process where citizens and the government interact with each other. This book seeks to analyze the tension between the government and peasants during the process of non-institutional participation by adopting the social control analysis approach.

1.3 Major Concepts and Analysis Framework

There are three major concepts constituting the theme of this book: non-institutional political participation, social transformation, and peasants.

Definitions of political participation vary widely among Chinese and foreign researchers. According to American scholars Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba, political participation refers to those legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions that they take.[3]

The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought also emphasizes the legitimacy of political participation in its reference to the term. Yet Samuel Huntington defines it as an activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision making in whatever way, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal, effective or ineffective.[4] By considering the characteristics of political participation within the evolving social context during the transformation period, this book proposes a core concept of "non-institutional political participation," which goes beyond the traditional dualism between "legal participation" and "illegal participation," and enables a broader interpretation of the concept of political participation. It is proposed to explain many non-institutional participation activities that can neither be regarded as legal nor illegal. Based on the new concept, an innovative approach is designed to conduct a thorough analysis of the two forms of non-institutional participation—induced participation and mandatory participation—by taking into consideration the changes in the interest pattern and management model in rural China during the transformation period. The analysis regards the government as an

[3]Nie and Verba (1996, 290).

[4]Huntington and Dominguez (1975, 148).

indispensable factor in the process of political participation and indicates that political participation is in its nature a political process where the government and citizens interacts with each other. Thus, the purpose of explaining the truth is achieved.

Social transformation, according to some Western scholars, is divided into two phases: the bottom-up erosion phase and the top-down market transition phase. Some other scholars have proposed the market transition theory[5] based on the analysis of the transition from planned to market economy from the sociological perspective. According to the theory, these two forms of economic integration have different impacts on social inequalities in different institutional contexts. During the transition from planned to market economy, market principles will overtake the place of administrative interventions, leading to changes in people's social status and the social hierarchy system. The development of market economy offers more opportunities for underprivileged groups to improve their social status and to level up in the social hierarchy, gradually forming a new social structure and opening new channels for social mobility, which, to some extent, lead to changes of the groups at higher levels in the hierarchy. The theory also states that economic system reform in socialist countries consists of two phases: the bottom-up erosion phase and the top-down market transition phase. The erosion phase in China is very short, mainly due to the intervention efforts of the Chinese government led by Deng Xiaoping to guide a swift transition from the bottom-up phase to the top-down phase. China's social transformation has basically gone through three phases: erosion, tentative transition, and complete market transition. Peasants have been an important driving force in China's social transformation, actively engaging in many experimental efforts, not only in economic aspects, but also in political areas, where they have successfully implemented an innovative self-governance approach. Yet undoubtedly, the social transformation has also caused significant impacts and pressures on peasants.

Analysis of China's social transformation shall be based on two facts. First, it is a government-led process. Second, the transition from a traditional planned economy to a modern market economy in China does not change its status as a socialist country, as both economic systems are only economic tools that can be employed in either capitalist countries or socialist countries, and whichever system tipping the scale indicates no essential difference in this respect. China will remain as a socialist country both during and after the transformation process. The social transformation process has four major characteristics: coexistence of old and new systems; apparent divergence of interests; increasingly complex choices of value; and intensified cultural conflicts.[6] Meanwhile, as the self-governance mechanism is not mature yet, the political participation of peasants is to some extent characterized by narrow-minded motivations and limited forms of participation. Due to institutional deficiencies, the political participation of peasants often goes beyond

[5]Lulu (1997).

[6]Xinjian (1996).

institutional boundaries in many aspects. It should be noted that the essential goal of China's social transformation is to speed up modernization, a process that has to be led by the government due to the historical background of this late-developing country. The government-led modernization process requires the government to play a powerful leading role, representing the interests of all the people and achieving benefits for all the people. During the social transformation period, the government shall adhere to the principles of socialism and the political aim of achieving high-level socialist democracy. As the essential goal of the political system reform, socialist democracy can only be achieved through on-the-ground efforts that take account of the country's specific conditions.

The book consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 makes an in-depth discussion about the theories related to the characteristics of transformation and political participation. By analyzing the characteristics of transformation, it especially expounds the changes in China's politics, economy, culture, and society during the transformation period, as well as the basic conditions of politics in the country. It raises and categorizes the concept of "non-institutional participation" based on the analysis of the general concept of political participation, offering a theoretical preparation for the further study of the theme. Chapter 3 discusses the characteristics of Chinese peasants as the subject of this study from different perspectives, including through history and present status analysis, static and dynamic study, individual and group description, as well as the diachronic and synchronic approach. This discussion is vital to the subject research, as the study probes into political participation from the meso-level perspective of peasants, which calls for a thorough understanding of peasants and a further analysis of their features. Following the necessary theoretical discussions and explorations, Chaps. 4 and 5 make an investigation into the subject. Listing the basic institutional guarantees and participating channels provided for peasants by the Chinese government, Chap. 4 analyzes the relationship between the adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas and the induced non-institutional participation of peasants during the transformation period. The political institution in China allows for, encourages, and respects institutional innovation, which is reflected in its valuing of the general public's pioneering spirit. In this sense, non-institutional participation does not necessarily mean illegal, thus changing the black and white thinking and enriching the connotation of political participation in general theories. This chapter then analyzes some typical cases to explain the adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas, the factors that induce the non-institutional participation of peasants, as well as the basic features and future trends of this participation. Chapter 5 focuses on the relationship between the change of the state's rural control mode and the mandatory non-institutional participation of peasants, as well as the impact of rural areas' exercise of power on the non-institutional participation of peasants during the transformation period, and accordingly discusses the features and future trends of the mandatory non-institutional participation. Chapter 6 makes some extensional research on the political participation of peasants on the basis of the previous analysis. By analyzing the interests and authority relationships in political participation, it suggests that a political participation based on

mutual benefits is a productive rather than a consuming or destructive way of political development, which could further derive a series of supporting institutions that promote the sound development of democracy. In order to maintain this mode of development, it is essential to ensure the balanced interests and the reasonable use of authority, to underscore the institutional role of ideology, as well as to take into consideration the cost of political participation.

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Chapter 2
Social Transformation Characteristics and Political Participation

Social transformation represents profound changes in production mode and lifestyle, which calls for structural changes in economy, culture, politics, and society, thus leading to a changed nature of political power, a core subject in political science.[1] Such transformation, therefore, is closely related to participations, and political participation is the most significant among all participations. Theoretically, social transformation is inseparable from institutional changes, which is a direct result of political participation as institution is the critical kernel of politics.

2.1 Social Transformation Characteristics

2.1.1 What Is Social Transformation?

Human society is constantly evolving from a lower level to a higher level. Therefore, "all its social institutions established in turn in history are only temporary phases in an infinite process from lower to higher stages."[2] Such social development, termed "social change" in sociology, is generally believed to feature two forms, namely a gradual, quantitative change before a particular social form becomes another one qualitatively and a qualitative change, i.e., a social form has transited to another one. The social change China is undergoing is defined as social transformation by academia.

[1]Professor Li Jingpeng (1995) points out that power and interests lie at the heart of all political phenomena including class struggle (see p. 12). He adds that the new system of the study of political science is focused on the operation of political power and studies political subjects, political behaviors, political relationships, and political mechanisms (see p. 14).

[2]*Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, vol. 4 (1972), 212.

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According to Marxism, social change reflects social progress in conformity with objective laws and is most fundamentally caused by contradictions between forces of production and relations of production, and the resulting contradictions between economic foundations and the superstructure formed by political and ideological elements. These contradictions inevitably lead to various social reforms and revolutions in different societies.

China's current social transformation is a holistic yet complicated social evolution that boils down to the accelerated modernization. Such transformation, as defined by many scholars, generally refers to changes in two aspects: One is the development issue of transformed social structure, i.e., the transformation that runs through the process of modernization from an agricultural, rural, closed, or semi-closed traditional society to an industrial, urban, open, and modern society. Modernization is a global trend and an issue of development, which has been influencing almost every corner of the world. The other is the reform issue of transformation of economic institution, i.e., from the self-sufficient traditional economy and the highly centralized planned economy to the socialist market economy characterized by effective roles of the market in resource allocation. As part of its reform initiative, China has experienced a unique process of changes in modes of production and exchange that is not very long compared to its progress toward modernization, and the establishment of its target institution will be completed by the mid-twenty-first century. It is the transformation in these two aspects, advancing side by side and interacting with each other, that has led to structural conflicts interwoven with institutional frictions, an important feature in China's current social development.

Professor Li Yining describes China's current stage as follows: China is a developing country in transformation. "Transformation" means its shift from planned to market economy, while "developing" signifies its heading from underdevelopment to modernization. It is the dual task of transformation and development that has brought China with extremely complicated issues.[3] According to Li, transformational development implies both the institutional transition and economic development of a country. China is thus a country of transformational development, or a developing country in transformation, which faces the dual task of institutional transition and economic development.[4] Some scholars, based on their observations on township enterprises, have defined "transformation" in a pure economic sense.[5]

[3]Li (1996), 3–4.

[4]Ibid., 1.

[5]Fei and Luo (1988), 230. According to Luo Hanxian, the socialist economy in China today is in transformation. There are three aspects to it: the transformation from natural economy to commodity economy, the transformation from administrative economy (result of the people's communes' administrative power) to independent economy, and the transformation from agricultural economy to diversified economy (dominant industries have shifted in some economically developed areas.).

As concluded above, China's period of social transformation began at the end of 1978, when the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee made its strategic decision on the shift of the CPC's work focus to economic construction and the ensuing rural reform started and has continued to this day. During this period, every great progress in China's reform and opening up and modernization is closely linked with the effective policies formulated and implemented by the CPC in line with China's national conditions. It is generally considered that these policies have been formulated and implemented with a focus on institutional transition, running through the whole period starting from the CPC's decision on the shift in work focus made on the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, to the adoption of the *Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Reform of Economic Structure* by the Third Plenary Session of the 12th CPC Central Committee which soon heralded in an all-round, urban-centered reform on economic institution, to the establishment of socialist market economy as the target pattern for China's reform of economic institution at the 14th CPC National Congress, and finally to the adoption of the *Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Issues concerning the Establishment of the Socialist Market Economy* as a further step by the Third Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee in 1993. As a matured governing party that always stands in a pioneering position, the CPC has constantly focused on promoting an all-round social transformation while concentrating on the institutional restructuring, as evidenced by its rational definition of China's current development stage, firm control over China's political restructuring and development of democratic politics, as well as persistent endeavor in fostering civic virtues (covering moral and ideological development, legal system building and improvement in science, education, culture, health, and sports) that meet the requirements of modern society. All these efforts are translated into both rules and requirements for policy implementation and scrupulous operations in practice. The CPC in power is surely the leading force for China's all-round social transformation, and this is both a prominent feature of China's social transformation and the fundamental reality of China's politics.

2.1.2 Transformation Characteristics: An Analysis

China has advanced on a unique path of social transformation that was initially led and powered by institutional transition, and marked by the progress of an all-round social transformation and accelerated modernization through the continuous deepening of institutional restructuring. This is a path of "Chinese characteristics"

primarily embodied in its "simultaneous progress of the two transitions and China's adherence to its socialist political system."[6]

Given the transformation that China has undergone, four features exist in this complicated and all-round process: (i) It is a gradual progress, as it begins with economic restructuring and gradually advances in a practical manner through constant exploration and practice, including promotion of public innovations in some areas; (ii) it is holistic by nature, reflecting the interrelationship among social systems; (iii) it is not synchronized, as evidenced in the actual social transformation marked by the consequential emergence of many contradictions, and (iv) it is planned yet spontaneous. It is planned because, in a macro and strategic sense, the transformation is motivated by the rational choice made by the Chinese government when China is confronted with both internal and external contradictions and pressures, as most prominently demonstrated in its phased transition toward market economy. It is spontaneous because, in terms of reforms in specific and divisional areas, many new elements are created by public or grassroots sectors and assume increasingly important roles in s ocial lives.[7]

China is a developing country in transformation with its government playing a leading role in driving a social transformation that is gradual, holistic, and planned, yet rapid, large scale, extensive, and sometimes even abrupt mobilizations of social resources. These characteristics of China' social transformation have produced great impact on many aspects, including exercise of power,

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[6]Chinese social development research group, "Institutional Innovation and Challenges in the Midterm of China's Reform," *Sociological Studies* 1 (1997). The report believes that at the turn of the twenty-first century, China would be in the most important transformation period. The transformation comes in two types. The first is institutional transition from a centrally planned redistributive economy to a socialist market economy. The second is structural transformation from an agricultural, rural, isolated, and traditional society to an industrial, urban, open, and modern society. Though the two changes took place concurrently during the past ten years of reform, they are totally different in nature. As a specific reform, institutional transition takes place in countries with planned economy. Even when the reform is progressive, institutional innovation must be accomplished in a relatively limited period. Otherwise, long-time institutional friction and lack of regulation will result in social disorder. Structural transformation is an unavoidable step in the modernization of all countries. As a matter of fact, it takes much longer than expected, as it usually needs the efforts of several generations to really change a country's status in world economy. The concurrence of the two changes, plus the socialist political system that China still upholds, distinguishes China's development model from those in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, which feature institutional transition, and those in emerging industrial countries and regions in East Asia, thus forming the current Chinese characteristics in social development.

As for the Chinese path of development, American scholar Maurice Meisner believes that China, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, was neither a socialist nor a capitalist country, no matter how many changes took place during that period. The Chinese path of development will never be fully understood as long as Marxists and non-Marxists still insist on the outdated hypothesis that there are no alternatives to capitalist and socialist society in the modern world. See Meisner (1992).

[7]Wang Sibin, "The Status of Social Work Program in China's Transformation Period," *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 4 (1997).

interest distribution pattern, economic, social, ideological, and cultural structures, moral values, lifestyle, marriage and family structure, and interpersonal relations (i.e., interpersonal communication, emotion, and psychology mechanisms). Such impact is remarkable in the following areas:

(I) Political areas (exercise of power);

(i) A highly centralized governance system has gradually shifted to a decentralized system with clearly defined responsibilities in exercising power;
(ii) Political power has been granted to a wider range of social groups, including all adult citizens who have been participating in governance more extensively and effectively, as best illustrated in direct elections at the grassroots level;
(iii) It is emphasized that the legitimacy of state governance is granted by the people and founded on the accountability for citizens, rather than theoretically advocating "power from the people";
(iv) The people have increasingly become the target, beneficiary, and authorizer of the government policy-making, and policies are made and implemented on the basis of the satisfaction, consent, and support from the people;
(v) The exercise of political power has constantly become more transparent, and the level of democracy has increased in political life;
(vi) The old regime of power and its operation mechanism still exist due to both subjective and objective factors, while the new regime of power and its operation mechanism are not yet institutionally regulated to work effectively, leading to rising contradictions in the exercise of power and surging inconsistencies over government policies and decisions among different governing authorities;
(vii) The once-overall intervention of political power is now restricted, but such adjustment of intervention, due to lack of effective regulatory measures, has brought the influence of political power, consciously or unconsciously, into economic activities where institutional transition is underway. As a result, political power frequently deviates from its intrinsic purpose of representing all citizens, and the principle of equal exchange in market economy as the new economic system is seriously undermined, with social and public interests extensively jeopardized. Such political corruption is still spreading contagiously;
(viii) The control of political power over society is substantially weakened. As the old social control mechanism has become unbalanced and weakened during transformation and more time is needed before the new mechanism is fully established and effectively functioning, in addition to the inefficient legal system and a lack of public awareness of protecting lawful rights and interests in a legal approach, loopholes are abundant to be taken advantage of in the process of transformation, leading to an upsurge of difficulties in social control and increased public concern over social security issues.

(II) Social areas

(i) The relatively static, closed, and orderly social life has rapidly changed to a dynamic, open, yet relatively disordered one, resulting in great changes in lifestyles, which now feature a higher level of socialization and diversification, a widened gap in interpersonal relations and rising social pressures;

(ii) Social differentiation is accelerated, featuring a remarkably wider range and larger number of integral parts of social structure, making social structure more diversified in forms yet more specialized in function. Before China's reform, the central government monopolized nearly all social resources and established a tightly categorized identity system through the long existing state-authority-centered administration of hukou system, labor force employment, and official personnel systems. Under the old identity system, people were categorized by their social class, urban/rural residency, official/worker occupation status, and workplace ownership. Since the reform was launched, the identity system has become more occupation-based. The conventional class of peasants is now further classified as agricultural producers, township and village enterprise workers, migrant workers, rural hired labor, rural workers in culture, education, technology, and health care, rural individual businessmen, rural private enterprise owners, township and village enterprise managers, rural administrative officials, etc. The class of workers is now further categorized as township and village enterprise workers, joint and cooperative venture workers, and private company and foreign enterprise employees, apart from the previous state-owned enterprise and collectively owned enterprise workers.[8] In the meantime, the regulatory mechanisms' conceptual elements of social structure have become more diversified and complicated as well;

(iii) Social mobility has become faster. The restructured ownerships, industries, and education institutions have provided unprecedented opportunities, driving forces and channels for social mobility as a result of significantly increased number of new social positions (occupations and professions), widened gap of benefits and interests, and expanded social openness. During the social transformation, the first wave of social mobility started from rural areas which were under the most formidable control, while the second wave started from urban lower classes and the third wave from within state-owned enterprises. The current social mobility displays the following features: Economic factor has become the primary reason for social mobility; more differences have occurred in social status; and the mobility has appeared disorderly and involved misconducts (see footnote 8). Five major trends are found in the current social mobility, i.e., from public to non-public sectors; from the primary industry to secondary and tertiary industries; from western inland areas to southeastern coastal areas and Special Economic Zones

[8]Zhao Huizhu, "Research Review of the Recent Social Mobility," *People's Daily* 14 Feb. 1998.

(SECs); from rural areas to towns and cities; and from low-income and low-social-rank occupations to highly paid professions of higher social status;[9]

(iv) Social contradictions, clashes, and conflicts have intensified, ranging from structural conflicts of the urban–rural dual system to institutional frictions arising from deadlocks between old and new social systems, from conflicts of interest among different interest groups and social classes emerging as a result of accelerated social differentiation to clashes between old and new social norms and lifestyles, and even conflicts arising from unconventional social concepts.

(III) Economic area, as clearly shown in:

(i) Changed modes of production, exchange, and consumption;
(ii) Changed patterns of interest distribution;
(iii) More diversified secondary (industry and commerce) and tertiary (services) sectors, increased layoffs and unemployed and higher pressure on employment;
(iv) More specialized economic roles and entities involved in production, consumption, and other activities in market economy;
(v) Accelerated transformation into a market economy;
(vi) Remarkably market-oriented and socialized national economy;
(vii) Gradual establishment of new macroeconomic regulation and control systems;
(viii) Significantly enhanced roles of market in resource allocation;
(ix) Gradual establishment of market economy mechanisms with competition and efficiency increasingly becoming guiding principles in economic life;
(x) Constant expansion of industrialization, a key drive to China's faster modernization.

(IV) Cultural areas

(i) Knowledge, culture, and higher education are increasingly respected due to extensively raised literacy rate, more accessible schooling, faster spread of knowledge, and further-developed IT and communication;
(ii) Unbalanced cultural development, with the increasingly dominant role of culture transmitted through movies and TV dramas in affecting the way people behave, has led to escalated conflicts between traditional and modern cultures, Eastern and Western cultures, mainstream and non-mainstream cultures, highbrow and lowbrow cultures, etc.;

[9]Zhang Kejian, "Basic Features and Negative Changes of Interpersonal Relationships in Social Transformation Period," *The New Orient* 2 (1997).

(iii) People are having a stronger awareness of market economy and modernization. But diversified values have led to differentiated personal choices and in turn to confused social value systems and moral concepts;
(iv) There is an increasingly popular call for a new cultural orientation that stresses the value of personality development, progress and improvement, tolerance and respect, freedom and discipline, efficiency and fairness, love and responsibility, inheritance and innovation, and sophistication and unworldliness.

As concluded from the above analysis of changes in political, social, economic, and cultural areas, social transformation has improved social structure, enhanced social vitality, accelerated social development, and established modern values. It has at the same time, however, brought about complicated social issues and political, economic, and cultural conflicts. An analysis of these transformation characteristics is of great relevance to further elaboration of the theme of this paper.

2.1.3 China's Basic Political Conditions: An Analysis

China's basic political conditions need to be analyzed to thoroughly understand the issues of China's revolution, socialist construction, and reform. It would not be possible to identify the trends of China's political democracy building during the transformation period or to analyze what has happened in the process without a clear understanding of the essence of China's basic political conditions. China's basic political conditions refer to all objective realities independent of man's will that have influenced China's political democracy building and consist of the following factors:

(i) China is a country at the primary socialist stage for a long period of time. This national condition should serve as the basis for analyzing and addressing all issues during the period. The principal social contradiction at this primary stage is the gap between people's growing material and cultural demands and the insufficient social production.
(ii) China is a developing country in the current world, given its less-developed social reality. Therefore, China as a developing country has to use politics as a major driving force in the government-guided process of social transformation to make a rational choice of modernization. It is now a pressing task for China to study and draw on the regular rules and patterns of the progress of modernization, which, specifically, involves two aspects: the rules concluded from developed countries and those from post-developed countries in their progress of modernization. In political areas, for example, the process of "social mobilization" is commonly experienced by all nations. In earlier modernized countries, the "social mobilization" has an impact on both social classes and the existing central political structure, but the impact is gradual and takes a longer period of time to phase in. In later modernized countries,

however, the impact on the general public directly caused by the fast pace of social mobilization along with the establishment of new social interests and centers of power comes instantly and abruptly, and its scope varies substantially. Besides, the pace of social mobilization in different institutional areas is also different from that in earlier modernized countries.

(iii) The CPC has been given the position, both as a result of historical development and as required by current reality, of leading China toward a prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced, and modernized country. Developing socialist democracy has been the goal that the CPC has unremittingly strived for, as democracy is the foundation for socialism and socialist modernization. Sticking to, strengthening, and constantly improving the CPC's leadership are the key to realizing China's rejuvenation and prosperity, improving people's well-being, and ensuring cultural advancement and political democracy.

(iv) The political development goal is clear, which is to develop a socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics. In other words, China's socialist democracy, under the leadership of the CPC, should be law-based governance and carried out on the basis that people are the masters of the country. To fulfill this goal, we should adhere to and improve the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants; we should stick to and promote the system of people's congress, the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation, as well as the system of regional ethnic autonomy; we should build a socialist country under the rule of law by promoting democracy and improving the legal system; we should strive to create a lively political climate with a stable society, a clean and efficient government, and harmonious and united ethnic groups as its bases. For today and in the near future, the chief objectives of the political restructuring are as follows: developing democracy, improving the legal system, separating government administration from the management of enterprises, cutting redundant government organs, promoting the democratic oversight system, and securing social stability and unity.

(v) There are conflicts between the political aim and the actual political practice. They are shown in the following three aspects. First is the conflict between the political aim and the institutional norms. The existing institutional guidelines are insufficient, inadequate, and incapable to ensure the achievement of the political aim and need to be improved. Second is the conflict between the high demand of such aim and the population quality. It requires a comparatively high level of sophistication of the population to make democracy happen. Such sophistication is shown in one's love for his country and his compatriots and the respect to the laws of his country, as well as a proper state of mind, reasonable code of conduct, and a general understanding of knowledge, ideas, and practices. However, right now the problem is that the ideas of people, laws, and nation are lacking in China. When it comes to politics, Chinese people either show idealistic fervency and excessive agitation or are dismissive and indifferent like anarchists.

Both attitudes are shown at varying intensity. Furthermore, people in China have a rather limited knowledge about democracy and its ideas and the way of participation. All these defects are detrimental to the development of political democracy. The third conflict is between what is required for obtaining the goal and the lack of experience in implementation.

(vi) There is a discrepancy between what is available in the basic political system and what have been done during power operation. The availability of the basic political systems means the existence of the system of people's congress, the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, and the democratic centralism which ensures that "all power of the state belongs to the people." In practice, however, phenomena such as the party interfering with the state organs' operation, officials pressuring and making decisions for their subordinates, replacing public opinions and supervision with that of the officials abound. Standard procedure for power operation either is not followed or does not even exist. The power operation of political democracy needs to be safeguarded by institutions with emphasis on standards and procedures. Democratic system itself is procedural that has a rigorous demand for the proper application of procedures. Whether the power operation has a strict procedure would determine whether the power is legitimate and whether such legitimacy is valid.

(vii) The economic, social, and cultural diversity in China and the differences in the development of social members and classes between urban and rural areas in different regions mean that national policies cannot produce consistent results. Under such conditions, the development of political democracy requires a process of introducing pilot programs, achievement evaluation, and gradual implementation instead of a one-size-fits-all solution.

(viii) The general public is increasingly demanding for political democracy, and the government has become more open and transparent in governance and the handling of administrative affairs. However, both parties still lack experience and practice in their endeavors. A lack of practice means that what one has done cannot meet the increasing demand for political democracy. A lack of experience in being open and transparent is reflected in three aspects: how, to whom, and to what extent.

In brief, China's basic political conditions are defined by the leadership of CPC, its socialist system, its status as a developing country, its basic political systems, and the imbalance in its political development.

As can be seen from the analysis above of China's basic political conditions, the development of political democracy in China, on the one hand, is stipulated by socialism. It is led by the CPC and has a clear fundamental political program and goals, with a firm institutional guarantee. On the other hand, it has distinct conflicts and various problems that may possibly or inevitably arise from the constraints in the current stage of development. These analyses show, both in theory and in practice, that the development of socialist democracy is a gradual process and needs to be pushed forward in an orderly and steady way under the

leadership of the CPC based on China's national conditions. They can also serve as the starting point of identifying problems in actual practice when pursuing socialist democracy during the transformation period and actively exploring useful patterns so as to promote the development of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics.

2.1.4 The Influence of Institutional Legacy

Social transformation is a path-dependent process, which means the social change of a nation takes place in its own historical setting. According to Marxism, changes in social patterns are mainly reflected in institutional changes. Douglass C. North, American economist and one of the founders of the new institutional economics, believes that "institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time, hence is the key to understanding historical change,"[10] and that institutional change is "overwhelmingly incremental and path dependent."[11] In terms of the relationship between institution and transformation, two problems are common in the transformation period. One is the insufficient institutional supply (or the lack of institutional resources), due to the fact that the original institution lacks vitality and is unable to meet the demand brought along with the social transformation efficiently. The other problem is related to path dependence, which means institutional legacy constantly affects institutional innovation. On the one hand, old institution disturbs innovation activities. To be more specific, old relations of production hinder the creation of a new institution. On the other hand, old institution is the basis of institutional innovation. The ties between both old and new institutions can never be severed, just like the continuity of history. It can be both an asset and a burden. Institutional legacy includes symbolic ones and material ones. Symbolic legacy provides efficient supply for institutional innovation by means of the old institution serving as the frame for and adapting to the new institution. Material legacy displays itself as a more rigid norm, which either curbs innovation activities by exerting enormous pressure on it, or serves it by becoming an integral part of the new institution. These two problems are interrelated, in a way that the widespread institutional shortage in the transformation period calls for innovation in institution building, a path-dependent process ultimately still influenced by institutional legacy. Histories of countries and regions that have completed the transformation or in the midst of it have proved this relation to be true.

An institution is a set of rules and norms that define appropriate and ethical actions, a framework in which people influence each other to form cooperative or competitive relationships and thus establishing an order. It is both a constraint of social interactions and a mechanism for maintaining balance. An institution is a

[10]North (1994), 3.

[11]Ibid., 126.

"public product," or an intangible social resource created to provide an incentive-constraint mechanism for social exchange. Generally speaking, institutions fall into three basic categories: constitutional order, constitutional arrangements, and normative behavioral codes. Constitutional order refers to the fundamental rules establishing conditions of collective choice—the rules for making rules. It is the set of political, social, and legal ground rules that establish the basis for production, exchange, and distribution. Constitutional order evolves slowly, for it is more difficult to be modified than the operating rules formulated in accordance with it. It focuses on the terms and conditions of collective choice. Constitutional arrangements, or institutional arrangements, are specific set of rules set up within the framework of the constitutional order, including laws, regulations, associations, and contracts. They evolve the fastest among the three categories. Normative behavioral codes also evolve slowly like constitutional order, making its modification more difficult than institutional arrangements. These codes are very important for legitimating constitutional order and institutional arrangements. In fact, it is the normative behavioral codes, including cultural background and ideology, which lay the foundation for social normative study. Among these three types of institutions, institutional arrangement is the endogenous variable of institutional change, and constitutional order and normative behavioral codes are its exogenous variables. Institutional arrangements as the endogenous variable can be distributive or redistributive. The demand for changing the institutional arrangements is based on an understanding that potential profits cannot be obtained under existing arrangements. Actors realize that they will gain these profits if they change the original arrangements. Therefore, the motive for changing the income distribution pattern in favor of oneself instead of others is quite clear.[12] Generally speaking, institutional innovation refers more to the innovation of institutional arrangements. The actual use and distribution of institution arrangements as a resource lead to conflicts between subjects of supply and demand, among different demand subjects, and between rigid norm and practical development. These conflicts appear more acute during the overall evolution of the society. The same institutional arrangements produce different results depending on the demand subjects. Some produce maximum yield, while others are counter-productive. Such evidences abound during China's social transformation.

China's social transformation has been influenced by the following six major institutional legacies: the traditional political institution before 1919, the new democratic political institution, the political institution adopted by the CPC during the wartime, the political model of the former Soviet Union, the political model during the "Cultural Revolution," and the Marxist ideal political model. These institutional legacies have two main impacts. First, psychologically and morally speaking, normative institutional concepts such as "people-oriented," "people

[12]The three categories of institutions have been widely acknowledged in the West. For more details of the three categories and their influence on institutional innovation, see International Center for Economic Growth (1992), 133–156.

are masters of the country," "for people's interests," and "be responsible for people" become the check and balance on power operation. Characterized by adaptability and openness, these concepts provide impetus for institutional innovation, while ensuring continuity when replacing the old institution with the new one. These concepts emphasize the fact that power comes from the masses and should be exercised for the masses to fully boost their initiative and creativity. Second, decision-makers' dictatorial manner, power worship, and obedience to authority are evident in power operation. Institutional legacies drawn from such phenomena exhibit the following five characteristics: (i) forcible execution as basic means; (ii) power usually derives from higher authorities; (iii) power is highly concentrated; (iv) power is not reciprocal and lacks principal–agent relationship, resulting in severe political asymmetry; and (v) power is exercised arbitrarily and randomly and lacks proper procedures. All these have led to disorderly and unregulated use of power, leaving the authority unsupervised and those in power corrupt. Specifically, the consequences are shown in the relations of nation and society, rule of law and rule of man, and inner-party democracy and national democracy. The key is to adjust the relationship between power and interests. These two impacts of the institutional legacies are the starting point where we begin to analyze China's political institution and political phenomenon during the transformation period.

2.2 Political Participation

2.2.1 The Pattern of Political Participation

The expansion of political participation is inevitable as social transformation deepens. In other words, social and economic modernization will certainly lead to the expansion of political participation.

In the opening of their book *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries*, Huntington and Nelson stated that the expansion of political participation is the symbol of political modernization. In traditional societies, only a few elites could involve in governmental and political matters… But in all industrial countries of modern days… all acknowledge and emphasize the principle of active citizenship.[13] In Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*, he revealed that a crucial turning point in the expansion of political participation in a modernizing society is the inauguration of the rural masses into national politics… In these countries, consequently, the key to political stability is the extent to which the rural mass are mobilized into politics after acknowledging the existing political system rather than standing against the system.[14] Huntington analyzed

[13]Huntington and Nelson (1989), 1.

[14]Huntington (1988), 74.

that this rural mobilization or "Green Uprising" is far more important politically for the later modernizing countries than it was for most early modernizers. In the latter, urbanization and industrialization usually reached high levels before the bulk of the rural population became available for political mobilization. The share of rural population in total population dropped when it became more politically involved.[15] However, in later modernizing countries, the process of modernization tends to start at all fronts. Therefore, it is possible for political consciousness and the idea of political participation to spread across the countryside at a time when urban development and industrialization are still at an early stage. If there lacks an effective and legitimate political institution, i.e., if the current social political system is unable to provide an effective and regular channel for the expansion of political participation, there will be signs of social instability to some extent.

There appears to be a very strong correlation between social and economic modernization and the expansion of political participation. What are the reasons behind this? Summarizing other people's research, Samuel Huntington and Jorge Dominguez came up with five explanatory points from a general perspective. (i) In a society, the level of political participation varies with the social and economic status of its citizens. Economic growth increases the percentage of those with higher social status, enabling more people to get access to better education, become wealthy, and find middle-class jobs. A higher social status leads to a change of attitude, which, in turn, leads to more political participation, as people start to feel they possess necessary capability and political efficacy. These people are more likely to have more political participation than those who do not have the feeling of political efficacy. In other words, economic growth raises the percentage of those with higher social status, people who have a greater sense of political efficacy and capability and regard political participation as a civil duty, actively participating in political affairs and thus promoting the expansion of political participation; (ii) with social and economic development, the number of different organizations and associations increases and so does the number of people who take part in them, thus gradually improving the overall political participation. The proliferation of enterprise organizations, farmer associations, labor unions, and social, cultural, entertainment, and religious organizations is a characteristic of a highly developed society. Members of these organizations are much more likely to participate in politics than those outside them. Economic development enables more individuals to be part of organized groups and stimulates the overall involvement with organizations in two ways: by participating in social and economic development and by raising the community or group consciousness; (iii) economic and social modernization causes tension among social groups, as new groups emerge, established ones are

[15]Huntington points out that such phenomenon prevails in early modernized countries, with the USA as the only exception. In the eighteenth century, the American War of Independence, the principles of equality and democracy, high literacy rates, high level of education, and the prevalence of land ownership (except in the South) contributed to massive political participation by peasants before the emergence of cities in the USA. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* 74.

threatened, and those at a lower social status try to use all possible opportunities to improve their status. As a result, the conflicts between social classes, regional power, and social groups are intensified and, in certain cases, generate the group consciousness, by which a certain group sees it necessary to take collective actions for protecting its interests from interference by other groups. In a word, this social group will be forced to turn to politics to defend its interests. Therefore, intense or long-term conflicts between social groups or challenges to their very survival can strengthen group identity, leading to the formation of an enduring pattern of political participation; (iv) to a certain extent, economic growth requires and facilitates the expansion of the role of a government. The scale of a government's role is obviously influenced by the dominant political values and ideology in a society, but even more so by the level of social and economic development. The more the government policies affect the interests of social groups, the more they realize the connection between their own purposes and those of the government. Therefore, they will be more proactive in seeking to influence policy-making, in an effort to prevent the government from raising the demands in terms of tax, labor service, and regulation; and (v) social and economic modernization happens when a country is developing. The state government is normally an instrument for social and economic modernization. Consequently, the relation between the individual and the state government is of great importance to the individual and what they stand for, because the government wants to prevail over the individual's any other allegiance; theoretically, an individual is fundamentally a citizen, which disregards any differences between social classes and social groups, and lays the foundation for public political participation. All citizens are equal in front of the government; everyone has the equal right and duty to participate in politics even at a minimum level. Thus, the political culture pertaining to social and economic modernization legitimizes and creates the environment for political participation.

The five connections show the relationship between social and economic modernization and the level of political participation. Although approaches to political participation generally become more varied along with economic development, such tendency does not explain the gap between the two (not a clear positive correlation), once specific approaches of political participation are taken into consideration. The differences between the two factors are manifest in three aspects: (i) The process of modernization, however irregular, usually evolves with time and is irreversible. In many cases, the level of political participation can vary greatly in a short period of time, experiencing sharp expansion (participation explosion) or shrinkage; (ii) many of the differences in way of political participation in certain societies are not determined by the different levels of social and economic development these societies have; and (iii) likewise, the different participation rates seen in each region are not necessarily the result of the different social and economic modernization stages they are in.

Apart from promoting changes in the modes of political participation, modernization has also facilitated the transformation of the bases of such participation from the traditional ones (patrons-protégés and social groups) to the modern ones (classes, interest groups, political parties), with the latter not necessarily undermining the role

of the former. In short, approaches to and bases of political participation in a modern society are more complicated and varied than in a traditional society.[16]

As a rule, a consensus has been reached that political participation and social and economic modernization are interconnected. Conclusions based on such consensus are evident in literatures concerning empirical studies on specific approaches of political participation. First, political participation is associated with the social status of the participants, including sex, places of residence, ages, professions, incomes, education levels, and what audiovisual contents they consume. At the microlevel, every factor has its own influence on political participation in different environments of different societies to some extent.[17] Second, which organization the participant is in is perhaps a more important factor than his social and economic status in elaborating differences in political participation at the meso-level. Third, the relationship between religion, ethnicity, region, and political participation is as close as that between social status and political participation at the meso-level.[18]

2.2.2 Approaches to Political Participation

In the study of politics, although the definition of political participation varies, the following approaches to political participation are generally agreed upon, as summarized by Ikuo Kabashima: (i) Voting. As the most popular political activity, voting requires little effort in participation compared with other political activities. Although imperfect as an approach to express political willingness, voting imposes great pressure on politicians and all people are influenced by the outcome; (ii) election campaigns, referring to participants persuading acquaintances and friends to vote for their preferred candidates, donating or raising funds for candidates and political parties, and helping run the election campaigns; (iii) regional activities, referring to taking part in citizen and resident activities in order to solve regional issues or to launch political activities with others. Regional activities include all political actions except voting, election campaigns, and other

[16]Samuel P. Huntington and Jorge I. Dominguez, *Political Development*; Greenstein and Polsby (1996), 189–205. In Chapter III of *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries*, Huntington and Nelson focused on the relationship between social and economic development and political participation. See pp. 45–69. Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba have also discussed this topic. See *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 2, 326–334.

[17]Japanese scholar Ikuo Kabashima divides these factors into four categories to interpret their respective influence on political participation. See Kabashima (1989), 13–14.

[18]Ikuo Kabashima summarizes the research findings of Samuel P. Huntington, Jorge I. Dominguez, Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba and Anthony M. Orumon the relationship between political participation and racial, religious and regional differences: “The differences in religions, races and regions result in conflicting ideologies between different groups in the organization and drive citizens to take part in politics.” For more details of Anthony M. Orum’s research on the relationship between races and political participation, see Orum (1989), 288–290. Works of other scholars can be seen in aforementioned notes.

activities involving dealing with bureaucrats for participants themselves or their families. The pressure on the government varies depending on specific activities participants take part in; (iv) individual contacts, referring to dealing with bureaucrats for participants themselves or their families; and (v) violence: this approach to political participation is conducted "outside the legal framework," while the other four are "within the legal framework." Violence is the power to influence government's decision by physically harming others or damaging personal properties. Acts of violence include coups and assassinations aimed at overthrowing leaders, creating chaos and riots designed to influence government's decision, revolutions attempting to overthrow a political system, and so on. These phenomena usually occur in political systems where citizens do not enjoy full rights of political participation. Even if they do, the minorities in society and those who have strong political ambition are likely to resort to violence. Governments use legitimate means such as policemen and armed forces to deal with such political participation, which usually results in bloody riots.[19] Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba divide political participation into four models (or four forms): (i) voting; (ii) election campaigns; (iii) citizens' active contacts; and (iv) cooperative activities.[20] In their practical studies, Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba did not ignore the fifth form—protests and other such activities, including parades, demonstrations, and other more direct ones.[21] Lester Milbrath distinguished fourteen forms of political participation at different levels (see the list below[22]).

Levels of political participation

Working for a political party or government	Decision-making activities
Serving as candidates for public office	
Political fund-raising	
Participating in a decision-making conference	
Becoming an active member of a political party	
Engaging in a political campaign	
Participating in a political meeting or rally	Transitional activities
Donating to a political party or candidate	
Getting in touch with civil servants or party leaders	
Wearing signs or sticking slogans on vehicles	On-looking activities
Trying to persuade others to vote	
Organizing political discussions	
Participating in election campaigns	
Susceptible to political influence	

[19]Ikuo Kabashima, *Political Participation*, 6–10.

[20]Norman H. Nie and Sidney Verba, *Political Participation*; Fred I. Greenstein and Polsby (1996), 300–303.

[21]Ibid., 319.

[22]Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1965), qtd. in Anthony M. Orum, *Introduction to Political Sociology*, 283.

Almond and Powell Jr. hold that citizens have two forms of political engagement. One is participants' activities. In these activities, ordinary citizens attempt to influence the making of policies. There are three basic forms of participants' activities: (i) expression of interests—through small-scale engagement, and informal and formal group activities; (ii) aggregation of interests—by voting in elections and working for a party's campaigns; and (iii) policy-making—by engaging in a referendum and participating in township meetings and workers' meetings. The other one is national activities. In these activities, ordinary citizens are part of the implementation of policies, to which citizens respond as taxpayers, as welfare recipients, or simply as law-abiding persons. There are four basic forms of national activities: (i) resource providers—taxpayers, conscripts, and jurors; (ii) resource obtainers—social security recipients, welfare recipients, and recipients of veterans' benefits; (iii) behavior administrators—obeying the law, parents sending children to school, and manufacturers complying with safety regulations; and (iv) symbolic recipients and providers—swearing allegiance, listening to political speeches, and voting in non-competitive elections.[23] In specific studies, Almond and Powell Jr. listed the four most important forms of political participation of Chinese citizens: (i) formal political participation in national institutions, mainly the election of people's representatives; (ii) participation in mass movements; (iii) political learning and discussion; and (iv) participation in the internal affairs at grassroots levels.[24]

Although definitions of political participation vary, the government and the citizens always oppose each other during the latter's political participation. From the perspective of social control, political participation not only represents citizens' control of the government, but also means that governments can control citizens by involving them in government institutions.

There are some relatively common problems which can be called "flaws" related to political participation in most studies: (i) Voting is taken as the indicator of political participation with high voter turnout indicating the high level of political participation and then determining the degree of democracy; (ii) the study of the abnormal phenomena of political participation as a form of control used by both a government and its citizens is ignored, especially the study of the abnormal behavior of the government in political participation. This has caused a misunderstanding that citizens are the beneficiaries who hold the initiative in the political participation and that citizens will benefit as long as they participate in politics; (iii) general rules of one's social and political life cannot be concluded only by quantitative research on individuals as a participating unit; (iv) as many forms of political participation cannot be determined through quantitative analyses and sampling surveys, conclusions drawn from such methods may be inaccurate, or even far-fetched; (v) some studies fail to examine political participation within the context of political development and neglected its social circumstances; and (vi) studies on the outcomes of political participation are insufficient.

[23] Almond and Powell (1993), 64–65.

[24] Ibid., 594–596.

2.2.3 Types of Political Participation

Neither this chapter nor this paper is devoted to providing a final definition of political participation. The analysis of the types of political participation in this chapter aims to help define the concept of "political participation" in this paper.

Diachronic and synchronic approaches are adopted in classifying political participation. The diachronic approach deals with the development of a democracy through time. Diachronically, political participation is classified into two types based on the democratic system by which a state is governed. They are capitalist political participation and socialist political participation. The synchronic approach deals with the degree of political participation at a particular period of time. Synchronically, political participation is classified into following three types based on whether a citizen is capable of exercising his rights over issues concerning his interests and takes actions to defend them. They are voluntary participation, mobilized participation, and passive participation. Voluntary political participation refers to actions citizens voluntarily take to influence political process over issues concerning their own interests and needs. Mobilized political participation refers to actions taken to influence political process by citizens mobilized by others or answering the call of the government. Passive political participation refers to citizen being consciously or subconsciously indifferent toward political issues or acting passively in political activities. These three types of political participation are difficult to differentiate in real life because of the dynamic relations among them.[25]

Variables correlated with citizen political participation can be used to classify political participation. By examining whether people are motivated internally or externally, political participation can be classified into three types: voluntary participation (internal forces), passive participation (external forces, individuals as participating units), and organized participation (external forces, individuals in interest groups as participating units). In terms of its outcomes, political participation can also be classified into three types: passive participation (neutral), destructive participation (malign), and active participation (benign). In terms of its relationship with political institutions, political participation is classified into three types: institutional political participation (legal), non-institutional political participation (may or may not be legal), and marginal participation (reasonable but illegal, reasonable but illegal for now, or reasonable and may probably become legal in the future). The classification of political participation in this paper is based on its relationship with institutions.

Social transformation facilitates more participation, resulting in more people attempting to influence the government in various ways. Whether higher participation causes instability largely depends on the level of institutionalization of the government. Poorly institutionalized governments cannot meet people's demand for political participation and see all forms of social instability, such as demonstrations,

[25]Wang Puqu, *Principles of Political Science* (Peking University Press, 1995), 210–214.

strikes, chaos, violent and non-violent activities to overturn the government, and ubiquitous corruption. Poorly institutionalized governments can also be easily manipulated by emerging interest groups who seek to influence decision-making to better serve their own interests, which will inevitably lead to social instability, such as bribery by the rich, student riots, worker strikes, public demonstrations, and even military coups in some countries. A well-institutionalized political party can socialize citizens that are more interested in and have more demands for political participation, so that they will comply with the political behavior norms of the existing system. According to Huntington, a poorly institutionalized government will result in revolution due to its failure to satisfy the citizens' need for participation. But how should we define the success of a revolution? Since the purpose of revolution is to establish a new political order and a highly institutionalized society, the success of a revolution depends upon the authority and stability of the resulting institutional system. If a highly institutionalized government reforms to accommodate the citizens' increasing demand for participation, then how should we evaluate the reform? An important indicator for any reform is its effectiveness to eliminate the triggers for future revolution, rather than the value of the reform itself.

Of Huntington's main findings, there are three points that are worth mentioning: (i) The legitimacy of modern society is generated from election, revolution, and nationalism. Accordingly, people should follow their government because it is voted through reasonably open and competitive elections; it served as a tool throughout history in establishing new and more mature society order, and it reflects the wish of a society (usually defined by race or language) to secure their unique and independent identities, free from the control of other social agencies. The three sources of legitimacy all have their corresponding administrations. Electoral legitimacy requires an electoral system and competitive political parties. Revolutionary legitimacy needs a well-developed ideology implemented by a dominant party in the system. Nationalism requires no specific administrative body because it is often related to the electoral legitimacy and revolutionary legitimacy; (ii) it has been proven that the Communist Party is the most successful revolutionary because it follows the theories of Leninism, which are highly effective in political organizations. Thus, a new political order may be established, featuring the synergy of civic participation and good governance; and (iii) to some extent, the stability of the government of a modern country depends on its ability to reform in rural areas. A reform that starts with satisfying the requirements of the intellectuals in cities is very likely to trigger revolution. This is because the intellectuals tend to be revolutionaries due to their sense of insecurity, feelings of alienation and guilt, and an urgent need for personal safety. In contrast, the reform that answers the demands of peasants will avoid revolution since land owners are the most conservative. No group is more revolutionary than peasants who own small lands or pay too much rent.[26] Apply these arguments to the current political situation in China, and we come to the following conclusions: The

[26]These arguments are summarized by the author. For interested readers, please refer to the work of Samuel P. Huntington. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Also, Huntington and Jorge I. Dominguez. *Political Development*.

Chinese government now enjoys ample sources of legitimacy (election, revolution, and nationalism); China has a well-institutionalized political system with strong capacities. A political system should be able to mobilize resources, distribute goods and services, regulate behaviors, and improve its abilities in other areas in order to realize its objectives. Western scholars have proven that compared with previous Chinese governments, the Government of People's Republic of China has significantly improved the four capacities mentioned above, thus enabling further enhancement in government work.[27] The reforms in China started in rural areas, which laid a solid foundation for future reforms and provided precedents and experiences to learn from. These reforms have provided proper access to political participation for citizens with increased enthusiasm.

2.2.4 Non-institutional Political Participation

Whether the study of political participation is a study of legal participation or of both legal and illegal participation is still up for debate. The author believes that the laws and characteristics of development can only be learned by examining the subject in context, for example, in social movements. This is especially true when political participation is studied. There are always conflicts between citizens and the government, no matter how developed a society may be. Conflicts are common, and so is cooperation. Some types of conflicting participation are permitted by government regulations (yet the extent and order are regulated), while others are not. Societies in transition, often with deficient institutions, have frequent occurrence of citizens violating institutional norms either consciously, willingly, and intentionally or not. Therefore, focusing on legal participation alone may limit the study of political participation. To arbitrarily classify non-institutional political participation as illegal is out of touch with the real world. It is partly due to the biased study of political participation.

Non-institutional political participation is a violation of the existing institutional norms and happens through channels of normal participation in the society. It falls into three types. The first type is characterized by emotional actions. This is because citizens are unwilling or unable to use existing participation channels or these channels are inaccessible to them. The second type happens with institutional rigidity and deficiencies. This type of resulting action can be creative or disruptive, or sometimes both. The third type is abnormal behavior of citizens when they are able to participate through normal channels. Such behavior is rational but not necessarily open.

Crane Brinton, an American historian, compared the causes, development, and results of the political revolutions in four countries during their transformation periods, including the English Revolution (the 1640s–1688s), the American Revolution (the second half of the eighteenth century), the French Revolution (1789), and the

[27]G.A. Almond and G.B. Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, 619.

Russian Revolution (1917). He then proposed the five primary causes of revolution: (i) The economies of the four countries were growing, not declining; (ii) there were severe conflicts between major social classes; (iii) many intellectuals became dissatisfied with the regime before revolution; (iv) the most distinctive feature was the dysfunction of governments; and (v) the ruling classes were riddled with corruption before revolution. In addition to studying the causes of revolution, Anthony M. Orum raised five important questions that must be addressed in estimating the possibilities of revolutions in all societies: (i) What is the nature of the society? Where is its economy heading, if it is heading somewhere? (ii) Who are excluded from social and political power distribution? (iii) How are they excluded? Who controls the means of exclusion? What is the extent of exclusion? What does it include? Does it include, for example, military weapons or propaganda? (iv) Do the organizations that inevitably lead to the movement have sufficient sources of spiritual and material strength? and (v) Are there signs of discontent? Is it difficult for discontent to come onto the surface? How likely is it to degenerate into non-political, rather than political upheaval?[28] Based on the studies of Brinton and others, Orum proposed five indicators that were crucial to predicting social movements, which also shed some light on the causes of non-institutional participation. (i) The nature of society, i.e., which stage of development a society is in, is key in determining whether political participation is institutional or non-institutional; (ii) as social transformation proceeds, those who are excluded from social and political power distribution will naturally demand to share the gains and are highly likely to achieve their goal by non-institutional participation; (iii) the means and extent of government control determine the consequence of non-institutional participation; (iv) the organizations involved decide the scale of the non-institutional participation; and (v) the approaches of non-institutional participation depend on the participants' attitude toward and understanding of the issues in question.

This paper classifies non-institutional participation solely on the basis of the citizen–institution relationship and focuses on actions rather than attitudes. The concept of political participation for this paper is not yet defined so far. As the paper is dedicated to the study of the political participation of Chinese peasants, the following points need to be clarified. The political participation of Chinese peasants refers to activities through which peasants influence the government and its decision-making process. (i) The peasant–government conflict is a theme of the whole paper; (ii) though peasants are now taking different jobs, they are still regarded as one social group in this paper. The rural population that has taken different jobs will be discussed differently further on; (iii) the case studies of this paper make clear distinctions between political activities and attitude—the two variables in political participation— and only focus on activities; (iv) since the topic of this paper is the political participation of peasants, the political participation of the civil servants or politicians who work closely with peasants will not be discussed, though they have a huge impact on peasants. The difference between village officials and peasants must be clarified. Village officials are indeed peasants, but they are responsible

[28] Anthony M. Orum, *Introduction to Political Sociology*, 402.

for managing the village. Therefore, while peasants take part in politics on and off, often in their spare time, village officials and sometimes township officials act like professionals in politics; (v) the goal of political participation is to influence the government, which is deemed authority to allocate social resources, with legitimate decision-making power. In rural areas, local CPC township committees and village party branches, as well as the administrative organs at county, municipal, provincial, and state levels, have the authority to allocate resources. Peasants make all these efforts just so that the authorities will accept their demands, even the demand to replace the decision-makers. This paper analyzes the peasants' actions not permitted by the governmental institutions, which include protests, demonstrations, and other radical behaviors, but does not discuss whether they are in line with the existing rules and regulations or not. However, intentional illegal provocations to governments will not be considered; and (vi) some peasants take part in politics out of their own will, while others may be mobilized. Several scholars confine their research to voluntary participation. In reality, however, only a handful of people take part in politics voluntarily. This is true not only for peasants, but also for workers and intellectuals. Mobilized political participation is more effective in swaying the government. In light of this, the paper studies both voluntary and mobilized non-institutional participation of peasants.

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Chapter 3
The History and Observation of Chinese Peasants

It has been proved by worldwide modernization process that modernization begins from the peasant society. Peasants were a disadvantaged and scattered group in the early stage of modernization, so they were likely to be abandoned and even "eliminated."[1] On the other hand, peasants have great influence on future social development at the critical historical point where traditional society transits to modern society. At different points, peasants play different roles and are comprised of different people. Thus, they form a diversity of social landscapes with distinctive features.[2] Even if peasants are to be "eliminated," "peasants and their off-springs" still make up most of the population in contemporary developed and industrialized countries. Even when peasants did exert great influence, they were still manipulated and detached from society. A peasant in China once said, "Mao Zedong was good at mobilizing peasants because he knew them well. But Deng Xiaoping outwitted Mao precisely because he didn't mobilize peasants, but gave them enough

[1]In *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx points out, "In the sphere of agriculture, modern industry has a more revolutionary effect than elsewhere, for this reason, that it annihilates the peasant, that bulwark of the old society, and replaces him by the wage laborer." See *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 23, 551.

[2]American scholar Barrington Moore, with great interest in the complicated and volatile process of global modernization, concluded three main paths of political development by researching on the changing relationships between classes of different eras and social backgrounds (especially the relationship between feudal landlords and traditional peasants). The three paths are the Western democracy adopted by the UK, the USA, and France; the fascism pursued by Germany, Japan, and Italy; and the socialism represented by Russia and China. He also subtitled his book *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* as "Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World." For more details, see Moore (1987).

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freedom to mobilize themselves instead…."[3] This is determined by the characteristics of peasants. Peasants at all times and across the world have something in common, but they also have differences, according to their different regions, environments, backgrounds, and times.

This paper studies the political participation on a meso-level and finds it necessary to analyze the characteristics of peasants as a group. Different conclusions can be drawn when peasants are put into different contexts and examined from different perspectives.

3.1 Definition of Peasants

According to *Cihai*, a large Chinese dictionary and encyclopedia, peasants are defined as laborers directly engaged in agricultural production. This definition is based on the material producer's subject of labor, which is well-grounded. Yet it only covers the peasant's occupation and leaves out its richer connotation. Foreign scholars mainly hold three different views as to what is peasant study. The first view is from the classical school, which sees "peasant" as individual agricultural producer throughout history. This includes city-state peasants of classical times, serfs during the Middle Ages, village community members, and independent peasants, all the way to contemporary farmers. Rural residents who are not agricultural producers are, however, excluded. This school of thought takes the perspective of "economic man" in capitalism and sees all peasants in history as "rational small farmers" or "penny capitalists." What differentiates them from modern farmers is their small capital and low productivity. The second view often takes the stance of neo-populism, i.e., postmodernism, and holds that "peasants" are residents of underdeveloped, patriarchal, or "agricultural societies." This definition includes both agricultural producers and non-agricultural producers, but peasants from non-agricultural society, such as family farmers in developed countries, are excluded. This school of thought considers peasants as part of a culture different from "urban culture," or uses the term "peasants" to describe the "characteristics of the whole society" before industrialization. This school is best represented by Daniel Thorner, an American agricultural economist, who proposed five standards for "peasant society": (i) More than half of the population is agricultural population;

[3]This is quoted from Yu Zuomin, a peasant entrepreneur in Daqiu Village, Jinghai County of Tianjin, who helped develop the local economy and was later sentenced to prison. As Hu Ping put it in his non-fiction novel, more than three decades later (after 1958), under the leadership of Yu Zuomin, the people in Daqiu Village began to live a prosperous life. But the so-called outstanding peasant entrepreneur in modern China failed to enrich his own mind and ended up living the rest of his life in prison. Nevertheless, with his limited knowledge, the peasant entrepreneur was able to understand the thoughts of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Some of his words (referring to the quoted sentence in the article) are very impressive. His insights are even better than those of many politicians and economists. See Hu Ping, "A Review on History: 1958," *Bai Hua Zhou* 1 (1998).

(ii) More than half of the labor force works in agriculture; (iii) It is within a territory-based country with at least 5000 government officials and public servants; (iv) There exists an urban–rural disparity, with more than 5 % of the population living in cities; and (v) The majority of the labor force works within each household and the labor of non-family members is far less important than that of the family members. According to his theory, at least 25 countries in the past 200 years could be defined as "peasant society," and many more partially match the definition during different periods. Although there are still "millions" of agricultural producers in developed capitalist countries or socialist industrial countries, they are no longer regarded as a "peasant class" according to this definition. According to the third definition proposed by Karl Marx, peasants are a specific social class in a specific production relationship, namely the peasantry class during medieval times. This definition excludes non-agricultural labor force in "agricultural societies" and farmers of non-agricultural societies, such as contemporary American farmers. However, this definition is applied differently when people interpret feudalist society and its relevant relations of production differently. In contemporary Western Marxist study of peasants, renowned British scholar R. Hilton's seven criteria are the most representative: (i) Peasants, who mainly work in the fields, have the means of agricultural production, whether they own them or not. They produce to be self-sufficient, yet they usually produce more than subsistence and for future production; (ii) They are not slaves or others' property. They may or may not be serfs or agricultural population; (iii) They occupy land under various conditions. They may be owners, lessees (rent may be paid in money, kind or share of harvest, with or without labor), or independent tenants; (iv) The work is usually done by family members, but occasionally with the help of slaves or wage labor; (v) They are usually members of units beyond their families, such as village community; (vi) Craftsmen in the village may also be considered as peasants; and (vii) They are exploited to different degrees by superior classes, including organs of the State.[4]

Philip C.C. Huang summarized the three viewpoints as the "three traditions of peasant studies."[5] They can also be considered three different methods, namely formalism, substantialism, and Marxism. After comprehensive analysis of the three traditions, Philip C.C. Huang explains the three different features of peasants in prerevolutionary China. First of all, a typical peasant mainly produced for direct household consumption. The production decisions he made were partly based on his household needs. In this respect, he was very different from modern urban residents, for whom production, consumption, work, and living were all separate. Second, he was also profit driven, because he produced in part for the market, and thus had to base production decisions on prices, supply and demand, and costs and returns. In this respect, his family farm also had capitalist characteristics. Lastly, we can think of peasants as members of stratified society in a regime, whose surplus supported the consumption needs of non-agricultural sectors. The characteristics of peasants as

[4]Qin and Su (1996, 11–12).

[5]Huang (1986, 1–30).

profit-driven, producer for subsistence, and exploited cultivator should be considered together. Each of the three characteristics reflects only one dimension. But we also need to distinguish between different classes of peasants in studies, because they may show different mix of these characteristics. For example, peasant, farmer, and tenant are different in each of the three types of characteristics.

In fact, the definition of peasants is an open question. Like peasants as a group, its definition is also inclusive and complicated.[6] Therefore, the definition of peasants should at least cover the following dimensions: (i) Chinese old sayings, such as "Peasants work long hours, with their faces to the earth and backs to the sky" and "digging for food on the land," describe peasants' life and how they make a living. They also reflect the relationship between peasants and land. Overall, land is their most basic means of living and major source of income. Peasants rely on land to support themselves, the importance of which cannot simply be measured by money; (ii) Agricultural production and its associated ways of production remain crucial for the livelihood of peasants; (iii) After they have produced enough for subsistence, peasants will more or less become involved in economic exchange. Even in a completely self-sustained agricultural society, although economic exchange may vary in scope and size, it never really stops. During such exchange, peasants at least need access to money and market before they can make production and consumption decisions based on prices, supply and demand, costs and returns to best allocate resources. This is the economic standard; (iv) Peasants are subordinates in an authority relationship to a greater or less degree and are dominated by outside authorities. Peasants must follow their regulations and orders and fulfill their "obligations" by submitting part of their incomes. This is the political standard; (v) Peasants have little say in defending their interests in the persuasion relationship; (vi) Peasants are committed to inheriting and maintaining cultures and traditions. This is the cultural standard; (vii) Background (or their identity) leaves far more lasting influence on peasants, especially with stringent household registration system. Because of this, their inferior social status is difficult to shake off even after they change their production modes, their roles in economic activities, or even their occupation. (Of course, this is bias, but it is also the truth. The English word "peasant," as a noun, meant "an animal or a rustic" in the eighteenth century, and as a verb, means "to subordinate and enslave." The latter usage has become obsolete. In many other European languages, the word "peasant" is more often associated with an inferior social class and background than with an occupation.); (viii) Generally speaking, peasants are closely related to their places of residence, because these are where they produce, live, consume, and work. Thus, they are unwilling to leave.

In summary, peasants are producers who want to make a living as well as profit-driven cultivators. They are subordinates to political power as well as

[6]For further research, the following materials on peasants can be used as references: Chen (1990), Qin and Su (1996, 1–43); Jin and Bian (1996), Chayanov (1996), Joel (1996), Huang (1986, 1–64). These books can help understand different schools of peasant study, their representatives and their main ideas.

inheritors and defenders of traditional culture. This definition, however, only provides a general profile. In fact, the meanings of the word "peasant" are always changing. In different historical stages, cultures, and social systems, the criteria of peasants show unique characteristics.

3.2 From "Patriarchal Clan Peasants" to "New Peasants"

According to the sixth and seventh criteria, peasants apparently are referred to as members of the "peasant society," constituting more of a social–cultural group, with emphasis on its tradition or premodernity rather than its profession. Peasants in this sense are the "patriarchal peasants" described in Marxism literature. This concept is frequently mentioned in the writings of Lenin. As a labor group, it is associated with manual labor and low productivity; as a social class, it is exploited through servitude and rental by feudal landlords. The most important implication, however, is what it indicates in a sociological context—individuals' strong attachment to the community or the community's tight constraint on individual rights and personalities.

Marx made his comment on the sociological implications of patriarchal peasants: "The further back we trace the course of history, the more the individual, and accordingly also the producing individual, appears to be dependent and to belong to a larger whole. At first, the individual …is part of the family and of the tribe which evolves from the family; later he is part of a community, of one of the different forms of the community…"[7] Lenin pointed out that in the peasant society (i.e., the feudal era), "the dominant feature is patriarchal and precapitalist in nature," namely "an insignificant development of a commodity economy and class differentiation."[8]

Mao Zedong was fully aware of the constraints that patriarchal peasants were put under. In 1927, he expertly summarized the restrained life of Chinese peasants as follows: "A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (i) the state system (political authority), ranging from the national, provincial and county government down to that of the township; (ii) the clan authority, ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (iii) the supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband). These four authorities—political, clan, religious and patriarchal—are the embodiment of the whole feudal

[7] *Marx/Engels Collected Works,* vol. 46 (Part II), 20.

[8] *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*, 2nd ed., vol. 25, 232.

patriarchal clan system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants."[9]

This summary concluded Mao's argument on the necessity of a peasant revolution and its target and became his starting point when evaluating the peasant movement. Mao knew and understood Chinese peasants very well; he clearly recognized the heavy burdens on peasants. In leading the Chinese revolution, he noticed their political and economic aspirations and how their lack of education hinders their aspirations. He knew he had to make the peasants the main force of the revolution and to gradually educate and change them while organizing, mobilizing, and leading them in the revolution and nation building, as well as meeting their political and economic demands.

Mao's understanding of the Chinese peasants is different from that of the school of rural construction. Members of this school also recognized the importance of rural reform on China's development and made corresponding efforts. But these efforts were only intended to launch a reformist movement of cultural transformation on the premise that no alteration would be made to the land ownership of old China.

According to Liang Shuming's viewpoint on China's rural areas, most cultural aspects of Chinese society (including the law, social etiquette, trade, and business) originate from and apply to the rural areas. A rural society is "ethics-based and divided by occupation," in which the interpersonal relationships are rooted in emotional bonds and obligations, "as if one does not live for himself, but for the sake of other people"; property is also communal in nature, which is based on kinships and ethics. The closer the kinship, the stronger the communal nature, and the more distant the kinship, the weaker the communal nature. There is no antagonism between classes, no monopolistic control of land and everyone can take part in political discussions. "China's problem is essentially not about the target of the revolution; it is about cultural transformation and self-salvation," Y.C. James Yen commented. He also believed that the Chinese peasants were suffering from four disadvantages, namely "ignorance, poverty, physical weakness, and selfishness," and only when these four fundamental problems were addressed first could China be revived. However, the school of rural construction totally ignored peasants' political and economic demands that were demonstrated clearly in the massive peasant movements in the 1920s and 1930s, and they tried to "eliminate the impact of the CPC's peasant movements" through educational and cultural reforms. However, they encountered two major issues: "First, (they) advocated social reforms while still clinging on political powers; second (they launched) a so-called rural movement that lacked rural support." As the result, the Rural Construction Movement inevitably collapsed.

Mao believed that everything was in a perpetual state of movement and change, through which we could find the general rules of development. This is his fundamental approach to understanding the world. Mao's understanding of the Chinese

[9] *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 31.

peasants was rooted in his observation of their typical behaviors in revolutions and nation building. He affirmed that peasants, as the main force in Chinese revolution and nation building, would also play a vital role in political, economic, and cultural development. (Whoever wins the peasants will win China; whoever resolves the land issues will win the support from the peasants—Mao Zedong.) Though he was excited by the Chinese peasants' enthusiasm and creativity unleashed in the revolution, he remained alert to the weaknesses of the "patriarchal peasants." In this regard, Mao's point of view was not unlike that of the school of rural construction. In 1929, he pointed out those weaknesses after seeing what was going on in the CPC organization at that time.[10] Mao said, "There are various non-proletarian ideas in the Communist Party organization in the Fourth Red Army which greatly hinder the application of the Party's correct line. Unless these ideas are thoroughly corrected, the Fourth Army cannot possibly shoulder the tasks assigned to it in China's great revolutionary struggle. Of course, The source of such incorrect ideas in the Party organization lies in the fact that its basic units are composed largely of peasants and other elements of petty-bourgeois origin; yet the failure of the Party's leading bodies to wage a concerted and determined struggle against these incorrect ideas and to educate the members in the Party's correct line is also an important cause of their existence and growth." In other words, two factors caused such incorrect ideas in the Party. Firstly, it is an innate problem brought about by the peasants who formed the majority of the Party; secondly, it is a technical problem resulting from the lack of peasant education and effort against incorrect ideas.

The "incorrect ideas in the Party" were actually the manifestation of the weaknesses of patriarchal peasants and could still be seen from time to time to this day. According to Mao's *On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party*, the "pure military viewpoint" might seem to result from "a lack of political consciousness," "the mercenary mentality," and from "the overconfidence in military prowess and doubt in the strength of the mass," but in fact it reflected the patriarchal peasants' reverence toward those holding power. For example, comrades with "mercenary" mentality did not realize that they themselves were the makers of the revolution and should be responsible for themselves, but they were instead satisfied with merely serving their superiors. According to their experience, as long as they were supported by authoritative power, they would be "secured" and risk-free. On the other hand, they were skeptical or even dismissive of the so-called coordination work (i.e., propaganda campaign, mobilizing, and educating the peasants) and the potentials of the masses; the so-called ultra-democracy was the manifestation of peasants' lack of discipline inside the Party and was the product of a handicraft and small peasant economy. When such lack of discipline was brought into the Party, it became very dangerous because "it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and

[10] *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 85–96.

thereby causing the defeat of the revolution"; The "disregard of organizational discipline" was a manifestation of petty-bourgeois individualism (The petty bourgeoisie included in this category is the owner-peasants, the master handicraftsmen, and the lower levels of the intellectuals; the owner-peasants and the master handicraftsmen were both engaged in small-scale production. People in this class were still essentially patriarchal clan peasants.) The "absolute equalitarianism" was the product of a handicraft and small peasant economy and was a mere illusion of peasants and small proprietors; the "subjectivism" was a manifestation of the narrow vision and arbitrary practices of patriarchal peasants in political affairs. Subjective analysis of a political situation and subjective guidance of work inevitably resulted either in opportunism or in putschism. Such practices inside the Party inevitably bred either loose and groundless talk or suspiciousness, or unprincipled disputes. In its social origins, subjectivism was a combination of lumpen-proletarian ideology and petty-bourgeois ideology. The "individualism" in the Red Army Party organization manifested itself as follows: retaliation, "small group" mentality, the "mercenary" mentality, pleasure-seeking, passivity, and the desire to leave the army. In its social origins, the individualism was a reflection within the Party of petty bourgeois and bourgeois ideas. The "ideology of roving rebel bands" was also a reflection of the characteristics of patriarchal peasants in the situation back then. The political ideology of roving rebel bands emerged in the Red Army because the proportion of vagabond elements was large. The "remnants of putschism" was a combination of lumpen-proletarian ideology and petty-bourgeois ideology in its social origins. Peasants having joined the Red Army and the Communist Party of China disseminated a whole set of concepts through their roles and functions in the army and the organization. Such concepts in turn affected the peasants' ways of thinking and behavior in society at large. It was from their performance demonstrated in this process that Mao Zedong formed his understanding of Chinese peasants.

Therefore, the characteristics of patriarchal peasants can be summarized as follows: First, there is an interdependent relationship stemmed from an isolated and decentralized natural economy and a closely knit social network based on kinship. Second, they have closed and relatively rigid mindsets with limited exposure to social changes due to their prolong confinement in the inter-dependent relationship and closely knit social network. Third, they have a strong sense of belonging to the community and a voluntary obedience to coercive power. Fourth, they are less social and tend to have a simplified, experience-based way of doing things. They are less likely to fit into the outside world since their values, codes of conduct, work, and life skills mostly come from their families. Fifth, in an ethics-centered society with limited resources, the importance of wisdom was less emphasized than that of moral ethics. Therefore, there was this interesting duality in patriarchal peasants' behavior. On one hand, they cared about the community and dedicated themselves to the works of public interests while valuing personal qualities such as determination and self-control. On the other hand, they neglected wisdom and individual creativity, underestimated the value of knowledge and talent as well as the importance of independent will and decisiveness. Such duality can either

be the two results of the same characteristic under different historical conditions or two contradictory characteristics, which constrain peasants' social behaviors. The duality could be characterized as follows: pragmatism versus utilitarianism; collectivistic value system for the public interests (though only for the sake of safeguarding the interests of the family and natural economy) versus unreasonable suppression of individual talent; perseverance and enterprising spirit versus conservative attitude toward life; love for hometown versus narrow-minded geographical outlook; pragmatism versus vanity; pursuing harmonious interpersonal relationship versus lacking the courage or willingness and ability to compete; open-mindedness (mostly for the sake of subsistence) versus conservative xenophobia; generous versus calculative, resigning oneself to adversity versus revolting against oppression; and a desire for equal distribution of wealth versus condoning the existence of privileges. Last, they are easily affected by collective thinking. These characteristics of patriarchal peasants, as a type of social culture, exert great influence on the society as a whole.

Patriarchal peasants became "new peasants" when "new politics" (outside control) shifted their identity.

Though patriarchal peasants were part of the family community, the group has known for being "cramped, destitute, and decentralized" since the Ming and Qing Dynasty.[11] "Cramped" means their living spaces were only small plots of land that could be plowed by simple tools such as shovel or pickaxe, typical of small-scaled peasant economy; "destitute" refers to the fact that they had few properties. Even if they tried to sell their goods in the market, they were doing so to make ends meet. Rather than being "small commodity production" which leads to capitalism, their way of commodity production was more of an "involutionary one," a far cry from capitalism; "decentralized" means that these peasants were scattered around the country. They completely relied on their own labor in independent production, dragging out an existence that could only meet their basic needs. They did not have and did not think it is necessary to have contact with others other than relatives or neighbors. Without independent thinking, they did not have any organizations to make use of except for kinship networks. These characteristics led to great changes in China's social and political structures: Firstly, there were peasants turned vagabonds, and even a significant number of professional vagabonds. The vagabond problem was serious because "loungers and idlers are like moth in the rice, and a vagabond in peacetime can become a rogue in famine years"[12]; secondly, the quality of the nationals deteriorated as a result, which could be witnessed by the changing process from "a small population of intelligent people in ancient times" to "overpopulation of the illiterate in later times."[13] The phenome-

[11]Sun (1996, 153–188). In *Historical Change of Chinese Peasants*, Sun makes a brilliant and thorough exposition of the changes of Chinese peasants' characteristics.

[12]*Sixty Famine Relief Strategies*, quoted in Wang (1991b).

[13]Ma (1986). Apart from this profound insight, Ma Duanlin also manages to reveal the internal mechanism of such change by associating the nationals' participation in agricultural, military, and cultural activities with their qualities.

non also gradually led to seclusion, which later becomes one of the Chinese national traits; thirdly, those characteristics led to one of the biggest social consequences: "the differentiation between soldiers and civilians." From then on civilians including scholar-bureaucrats, peasants, laborer workers, and businessmen "had known nothing about armors or soldiers in peacetime, and no one in these groups had joined the army"; fourthly, they had influenced the evolution of the rules and patterns of the feudal political struggle. The feudal society was characterized by power dominance, and politics had played a vital and prominent role. When poor peasants were left with small patches of land and dispersed, politics then was not independent of the competition between different class forces, and the key to being in power was not winning support of the people, but the ability to hire a professional army that could subdue any dissident force and cling to a large bureaucratic machine. Therefore, what a feudal dynasty needed most was not independent and intelligent people, but obedient slaves; and fifthly, the most serious social consequence is that peasants were disconnected from each other and left stranded in isolation.[14]

Despite the diversity in traditional Chinese rural villages, they had one thing in common, i.e., there was a low degree of integrity between regions, and the cooperation between villages was also rather limited, which made outside force hard to overpower the intrinsic authority of families. Therefore, social cohesion was lacking under such circumstances. The CPC achieved total management from the outside (realized the establishment of new politics) and transformed rural villages into a larger regional system. "New politics has reinvented the foundation of the old, and new rural communities have been organized according to modern political and administrative principles".[15] Supported and encouraged by new politics, the goal of "Land-to-the-Tiller" off and on for thousands of years has largely become a reality. Under the management of the new politics, peasants have since demonstrated the spirit of teamwork and dedication. They become more creative, pragmatic, and tolerant and have also shown discipline and perseverance. Such total change suggests that they have become "new peasants."[16] Although still backward, illiterate, and superstitious, they have attained spiritual freedom, which had never been valued for thousands of years. They not only play an important role in the new politics, but also become organizers of revolutions and contribute to the building of a new China. The passion and creativity unleashed by these new peasants are a sweeping force in the new political environment.

In what way did the new political system break down the shackles imposed on "patriarchal peasants" and transform them into "new modern peasants"? Professor Wang Huning elaborated from seven aspects below on how the new political system achieved total management over conventional villages: (i) A new social and political system was established, with administrative power proactively

[14]Sun Daren, *Historical Change of Chinese Peasants*, 161–162.

[15]Wang (1991a, 153).

[16]Strong (1984, 121).

penetrating into the village family structures in a top-down approach and becoming regulating authority; (ii) A macroresource allocation mechanism was developed, exerting significant influence on the rural political and economic development that was once unseen in village families; (iii) Mandatory political and economic approaches were employed to gradually break down the traditional village structure and change the environment and condition of its existence; (iv) Original districts divided into clan communities were replaced by administrative districts by the exercise of public authority; thus, the original clan communities were diminished and even further broken down into smaller units or segments on purpose, such as the deliberate placement of members of one clan community into different administrative districts; (v) The emergence of a new mode of production broke the traditional organization of production, which was led by household economy. The introduction of politics into communities and production teams is actually to marriage between politics and economy. The combination of political and administrative system with productive structures helps the New Politics achieve dominance over clan structure; (vi) A completely new set of norms and values replaced traditional family concept, the promotion of which was hard to resist as it was carried out through political mechanism down to the level of village communities; and (vii) Norms of conduct, previously established by clan communities, were replaced by the legal system and procedures in modern society supported by a powerful mechanism of law enforcement. The major shift mentioned above has indeed been remarkably effective, albeit superficial in some aspects. Thus, the new political system took over a dominating role previously controlled by village clans, some of which began to conceal their presence while others were extinct after many years. The process of transformation eventually led to the current integration of the formal political structure and village clan structures. And the difference between various regions lay in which structure was more dominant, or if the two exerted equal influence. Generally speaking, most village clans ended up being included in the mainstream formal political structure.[17]

Governed by the new political system, new peasants demonstrated different characteristics from previous patriarchal peasants (though the former still possesses some irremovable characteristics of the latter) in the process of revolution and nation building as follows: (i) External control mobilized peasants to drive the social, political, and economic transformation through a bottom-up process. They initiated the comprehensive connection between themselves and the overall social, political, and economic policies and institutions, thereby breaking free from isolation and becoming an integral part of the new country and new political system. In turn, they became increasingly involved in nationwide political and economic activities to a greater extent; (ii) Since the dominant external control mechanism exerted influence through a bottom-up process, the peasants experienced profound changes in thinking, some even traumatizing, as there was no way for them

[17]Wang Huning, *Village Clan Culture in Contemporary China—An Exploration on China's Social Modernization*, 152–153.

to escape from class conflicts that were previously unseen in traditional villages, and the collapse of the stiff village structure was propelled right by themselves with remarkable resolution. This unique experience evoked a positive change in peasants which helped build unprecedented confidence in their own strength, and hope for a bright future; (iii) After getting closely connected with the dominant external control and fulfilled part of their long-pursued dreams (they have gained ownership of the land and freed themselves from exploitation from landlords and usurers; they are no longer under the oppression from bureaucrats, warlords, and bandits, or the restriction by clan communities), the peasants had demonstrated remarkable willingness to make a change. Yet at a certain point, they were so eager to embrace radical changes, which was even bordering on utopian ideals or anarchism. As demonstrated in the bottom-up rural community reform, and also in the process of collectivization, they were more than willing to be involved in drastic changes and wished a radical reform could improve their well-beings; (iv) The dominant external control not only released the potential of peasants in pursuit of their dreams, but its reliance on peasants as an imperative driving force had also evoked strong convictions in peasants to change their living environment and become master of their own destiny. In fact, the practice of "Mass Line" exemplified approaches and principles aiming to foster close ties between the external control and the public, further inspiring a new sense of loyalty in peasants. It is so strong that their confidence in the external dominating force could hardly be shaken, even when such control had made huge mistakes that cost the interests of peasants. At a certain point, excessive loyalty could also develop into blind idol worship to the leader; and (v) Governed by the dominant external control, the new peasants had been organized from the bottom-up, and displayed multiple merits and virtues such as unity, dedication, pragmatism, tolerance, discipline, and persistence.

Therefore, new peasants could be defined as follows: (i) Lived in villages governed by dominant external force and were organized from the bottom-up; (ii) Stepped out of the independent relationship stemmed from an isolated and decentralized natural economy and were situated within a political system built on the basis of natural economy and planned economy (A self-explanatory fact is that the livelihood of every peasant relied on the support of political regime); and (iii) Cast off their subordinate position in isolated clan communities, and joined the embrace of new political system.

3.3 Peasants in Industrialization

The relationship between peasants and industrialization must be clarified in the process of modernization. It is generally considered that China's modernization was triggered by the Western imperialist invasion and was the result of the clash between the Western and the Chinese Eastern civilizations. But what must be understood is that it was the CPC that took China's industrialization as its

historical mission, and began the modernization process after it achieved national independence and solved fundamental problems relevant to peasants. In other words, China's modernization which focused on industrialization was kicked off by the CPC government. In this process, peasants have played a decisive role.

As to the relationship between modernization and peasants, Barrington Moore Jr. states that "the process of modernization begins with peasant revolutions that fail. It culminates during the twentieth century with peasant revolutions that succeed. No longer is it possible to take seriously the view that the peasants in an 'object of history', a form of social life over which historical changes pass but contributes nothing to the impetus of these changes. For those who savor historical irony it is indeed curious that the peasant in the modern era has been as much an agent of revolution as the machine, that he has come into his own as an effective historical actor along with the conquests of the machine. Nevertheless the revolutionary contribution has been very uneven: decisive in China and Russia, quite important in France, very minor in Japan, insignificant in India to date, trivial in Germany and England after initial explosions had been defeated."[18]

In the early stage of the modernization process, the role of peasants is generally summarized as follows: (i) modernization stemmed from a traditional society, with the peasants playing a fundamental role by providing capital, materials, and labor; (ii) peasants' conservatism and determinism during the modernization process reflects their desire for stability in an environment in which they had no welfare. Naturally, they would react to a favorable occasion, but, as modernization expands, they would inevitably become the victims of the process. This is a cruel, but simple fact; (iii) In the modernization process, peasants can exert a deep influence on the nature and manner of the process (whether it is revolutionary or conservative; achieved through natural evolution or by forced appropriation of other countries' development model) through a number of different peasant organizations according to the timing and the characteristics of modernization in various countries.

To put in plainly, modernization process affects the core interest of peasants—their connection to the land. Modernization, which focuses on industrialization, will naturally put an end to the relation between peasants and land, shifting the nucleus of the production structure from the agricultural segment to the industrial segment, and affecting the employment structure, as the population working in manufacturing and industrial segments gradually exceeds that in the agricultural segment. That is to say, industrialization is essentially the change the economic structure to increase the industrial element while reducing the agricultural one. As a result an agricultural country becomes an industrialized one. From the economic perspective, modernization influences peasants' lives and vice versa. Peasants have to adapt to the process, as they strive to make a living, pursue profits, and are sometimes exploited. Therefore, "as agricultural producers and operators, as well as the main body of agricultural economy, peasants will inevitably be affected by

[18]Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 368.

the revolutionary structural changes caused by industrialization. On the other hand, the agricultural segment will influence industrialization through its own, independent actions."[19] All these are reflected in the following aspects:

(i) The impact of industrialization on peasants. Industrialization has a profound impact on peasants in terms of their number, mindset, social status, and employment issues, causing a series of changes. First, in terms of quantity (i.e., agricultural labor force, agricultural population, and rural population), the absolute and relative number decreases. This is the most direct and obvious impact. Second, there is a conceptual change from the traditional peasant to the modern peasant. Industrialization not only transforms peasants from self-sufficient producers to commodity producers, but also changes their conservative mindset, making them more proactive in seeking their interests and more communicative. This is the deepest impact. Third, their social status changes. Industrialization changes the social status of peasants by transforming the dependent, restricted peasant group into an independent social class through social integration. During the process of industrialization, the traditional concept of the peasant will disappear leaving the way for the formation of a new social class, the modern peasants;

(ii) Peasants' role in industrialization: First, peasants are the main production force in the agricultural sector, so the role of peasants in industrialization is in fact the role of agriculture in industrialization. Peasants contribute to industrialization through the goods they produce, the market they create through consumption, the industrialization factors they create through the transfer of labor and capital, and the foreign exchange income created for industrialization, through the export of primary products that they produce; second, industrialization makes peasants a relatively independent social class, making it possible for them to exert a certain political influence. This influence may occur mainly on the development and implementation of government policies on agriculture, rural society, and rural community development.[20]

How did modernization marked by industrialization affect the relations between peasants and the land and later involve peasants in the political tides? First, it did through the penetration of market economy into traditional villages. That is, the dramatic expansion of market economy broke certain balance between the peasants and the land, which was originally maintained by the traditionally self-sufficient and natural economy, thus affecting the peasants' relationship with the land. Therefore, industrialization, by changing the division of labor in rural areas and impacting land ownership and property rights, increased peasants' connections with the outside world. Second, successful modernization requires the expansion of the state authority, through establishing security and order in a broader context and integrating various regions. This process affected the distribution of power in

[19]Chen et al. (1994, 39).

[20]Ibid., 39–43.

rural areas and upset different groups of stakeholders in the rural society. Peasants were entangled in intricate relationships with external political organizations and policies due to the mounting external control.

During the process of industrialization, the Chinese peasants went through two different phases and during each phase demonstrated distinctive characteristics. The first was the phase of collectivization, approximately dating from the early 1950s after the founding of the PRC by the CPC to the end of 1978. Chinese peasants showed themselves as "a new type of peasant" in this phase when being under the control of a planned economy and restrained by powerful state authority. During this period, peasants were dragged into politics by these two powerful forces, and yet showed great compliance most of the time. (Excessive claim from the peasants put them under extreme poverty, leading to spontaneous self-reform; but such reform did not bring about revolution because peasants were tied up with the external power.) The second has been the phase of transformation, approximately dating from the emergence of the household responsibility system at the end of 1978 to the present. This phase has seen the transformation from a natural and planned economy to a market economy and a balance has been achieved between the state and the local control. Because of the penetration of the market economy and the weakening of external (political) control, Chinese peasants in this phase are neither "patriarchal peasants" nor "new peasants," but they are also yet to become modern peasants.

3.4 Characteristics of Peasants and Their Occupational Differentiations During the Transformation Period

Peasants work to make ends meet. When their basic subsistence could no longer be guaranteed by abstract ideologies, enthusiasm, and further jeopardized by imbalanced resource allocation, they had to claim for more individual rights and improve their living standards. The adoption of the household responsibility system, worked out spontaneously among peasants in poor areas, not only provided institutional guarantee for improving the peasants' basic living standards, but also legal protection for their fight for autonomy as producers and business owners. More importantly, it was later extended to other sectors and helped shape the economic reform. Chinese peasants had shown great innovative spirit during the transformation period by introducing the ideas of household contract responsibility system, township enterprises, and the joint-stock cooperative system. These innovative reforms, especially those concerning autonomy in decision-making, contract responsibility system, separation of land ownership and land-use rights, joint-stock system, and industrialization, have inspired the subsequent reforms of the urban economic system in China. Peasants' efforts to make a living facilitated China's transformation from a rigidly planned economy to a market economy and ushered in a new era of economic reform—transformation period. (But peasants

are after all peasants. Since they are subordinate to political power, peasants alone could never make a revolution or reform happen.)

The household responsibility system brought major change and adjustment to the agricultural management system. (It provided a comprehensive solution to the problems in which the old relations of production in agriculture and its management style could no longer match the new productive forces, the increased economic needs and improved technical proficiency of the Chinese peasants.) Moreover, the system gradually pushed forward the rural reforms throughout China. (It not only replaced the economic management system of "three-tier ownership, that is, the means of production being owned by the people's communes, the production brigades and the team, with production teams serving as the basic agricultural collective units"; but also reconstructed the administrative system that "integrated government administration and economic management." The introduction of the household responsibility system also brought about a new development in rural cooperatives and a real economy, combining and the once fragmented production factors such as technology, capital, labor forces, and means of productions, to create a socialized, professionalized, and commercialized agricultural production system. In addition, the system improved the economic structure in rural areas and the economic development became more diversified and open.) Above all, the household responsibility system later drove the overall economic reform. It was regarded as the third "encircling cities from the rural areas" in China's modern history and was as powerful as the previous ones. The first one took place during the new-democratic revolution period (1919–1949) when the CPC, by building rural bases and gradually encircling the cities, finally gained victory of the revolution. The second one was the introduction of state monopoly over the purchase and marketing of agricultural products, as well as the mandatory process of rural collectivization, which facilitated the socialist transformation of national capitalism.[21] From the perspective of social change, thanks to the household responsibility system, substantial progress has been made in popularizing market economy in rural areas, which changed the traditional self-sufficient units and small-scale peasant economy. The earlier production and management mode for planned economy in rural areas could no longer be continued. Because of such change, the traditional smallholders' mentalities were deeply shaken and some of the established ideas collapsed. As a result, peasants were no longer isolated from the outside world. Though Chinese peasants in transformation period were not yet contemporary in their ways of thinking, they were actually on their way toward agricultural modernization, as could be seen from their positive attitude, their rationalism and scientific spirits, and especially from their doer spirit, initiatives toward transformation, and their understanding of the importance of the rules of law.

Peasants in the transformation period have showed that they are insightful, broadminded, and ambitious. They have made great impression with three characteristics: "shrewdness," "fortitude," and "dedication." Instead of being simple and

[21]Hu (1991, 20).

ignorant like in the past, in today's market economy, peasants have to be shrewd in business dealings; fortitude refers to their resolution to shake off poverty; dedication is one of the traditional virtues that Chinese peasants always have. They have made clear that they will make every effort to improve and to lift themselves out of poverty, so as to keep pace with the time, and transform themselves into new peasants. They reflected seriously on why peasants in the past had failed to make great achievements, and found that it was due to short-sightedness and skittishness. Therefore, they no longer envy the winners but seek their advices; nor gloat over the losers, but learn lessons from their failures. In a word, Chinese peasants have shown themselves as positive, modern, and civilized citizens.[22] Obviously, with the establishment of a market economy, peasants' participation in the market has become regular, and people's interdependence in the natural economy and reliance on politics in the planned economy gradually disappeared, replaced by independence based on material needs in the market economy. This transformation includes the change from primacy of communes to individual independence, from peasants' roles imposed by others to the identities developed by themselves, from no room for difference to the allowance for difference, from a vertical hierarchy to a flat structure. However, this transformation is merely a process and is far away from the realization of unbound personalities based on all-round development of individuals and shared social productivity.

The reform had also revived the characteristics of patriarchal peasants. The household contract responsibility system had made every household become the basic unit of production and operation, injecting vitality into the traditional families; meanwhile, the decline of commune organizations had also eroded the collectivity value in new peasants, and the weakening of external controls facilitated the process of households and families overtaking duties previously governed by external forces, especially the ones that involved managing relations with the outside world, safeguarding peace and security, and maintaining justice and order. During the transformation period, generally speaking, China's countryside, a once traditional, agricultural society that was detached from cities, was transformed into a modern one that integrates agriculture, industry, and trade together, and is connected with urban areas. But with respect to the overall social fabrics, China's rural social structure is faced with new dilemmas, including the contradiction between the strengthening of the social system in the macroperspective and the weakening of it in the microperspective, as well as the contradiction between the erosion of village and family culture in the long run and its resurrection in the short term, plus the conflicts within villages and families and the ones between them. The actual eight phenomena of these contradictions have formed the basis in analyzing the status quo and the development of the social, political, economic, and cultural lives in townships, they are: first and foremost, limited resources versus ultra-high demands; second, the disagreement between the regulatory

[22]This is quoted from an interview of Gong Shiquan, a peasant in Hehaiwan Village, Jinnan District, Tianjin. The interview is worth reading for those who want to research on the characteristics of Chinese peasants. See *People's Daily* February 13, 1998.

approaches and the development of resources; third, the clash between orders of a social system and that of a family culture; fourth, the disharmony between the loose administrative and institutional structures and the withering village and family cultures; fifth, the dissonance between finite institutional structure and ever-expanding economic activities; sixth, the social fabric strengthened by the development of production relations undermined the role of kinship in rural families; seventh, improved productivity versus ever-increasing population; and eighth, the way families accumulate resources is often at the expense of group undertakings. These contradictions, embedded deeply inside rural societies during the transformation period, have resulted in some negative phenomena, including undisciplined township organizations, lacking of social order in some areas and backward culture and education.[23]

In a social structure full of these contradictions, peasants demonstrate some new characteristics during China's transformation period: (i) They participate in the economic life like an "economic man," profit-driven and rational, and with consciousness quite clear of property rights and a sense of self-efficacy, they pay more attention to analyzing costs and benefits and seek maximum output. The relative independence of their individual interests has been strengthened dramatically as they become more clear-minded and pragmatic; (ii) They participate in the economic life as producers to make a living. Facing the complex and fast-changing market economy, they tend to pursue stability and tend to be narrow-minded, conservative and dependent, thus blindly following the crowd; (iii) Peasants, as part of the society, have a personal network that has become more diversified. It evolved from something that based solely on kinship to a network of interconnecting relations such as kinship, common regions, and business relations. The exchange between people and transactions between businesses both within and outside the network become more frequent and are carried out at larger scope, both at home and at abroad. Also, Occupations at this time have become more diversified; (iv) With visions broadened and economic status improved, peasants, who once attached themselves to the powerful, have become more proactive in participating in politics and have become more aware of the importance of guaranteeing individuality and individual rights. They begin to evaluate the powerful people's achievement with new standards and strive hard to express their will in the political life through many creative contributions, such as "villagers committee," "making village affairs public" and "general election"; (v) As the inheritors of Chinese traditional culture, Chinese peasants are also patriarchal in nature. Even during China's transformation period, it is still difficult for them to cut off their association with the land and their attachment to it, which is partly due to the ambiguous role they play in the market economy. It is also impossible for them to escape the taxing task of providing resource for industrial development, although they become increasingly aware of their rights as stakeholders; they become more democratic and participate more actively in political affairs, yet are somehow destined

[23]Wang Huning, *Village Clan Culture in Contemporary China—An Exploration on China's Social Modernization*, 239–251.

to be the subordinates of the powerful; even after the market economic system is well-established, their patriarchal nature will still resurface from time to time, as culture is the most stable component of a society, despite influences from various new thoughts and concepts.

Social transformation has accelerated occupational differentiation among peasants, which in turn has driven the diversification of the social structure in rural areas. Occupation is the foundation of social stratification, and with the occupational differentiation comes the interests' differentiation. There is an interaction between the occupational differentiation and social differentiation. They reinforce each other especially in the early period of China's social transformation. The occupational differentiation can promote the diversification of social structure, which in turn can accelerate and complicate the occupational differentiation. Such interaction not only improves the social structure by promoting social mobility and competitiveness as well as openness and dynamism, but also inspires better social integration and brings new requirements to social control.

Chinese peasants could simply be called "commune members who are peasants" during the period when the people's commune was implemented. At that time, they lived in a society with simpler structure and were under the unified management of the collective economy, an economy based on the integrated administration of local government and communes and characterized by onefold ownership structure, simple industrial structure, and distribution channels, as well as limited business models, especially in non-agricultural industries. Peasants lacked autonomy in production, distribution, and exchange of goods, and even in terms of consumption, their autonomy was very limited. During China's transformation period, China's rural areas have gone through drastic economic and social reforms, resulting in more complicated social structures, the collapsing of the rigid management system, the rapidly developed industrial division in rural areas, and diversified ownership structure. An important change is that some peasants begin to work in non-agricultural industries instead of being just agricultural laborers. High occupational differentiation among peasants enriches the social structure of rural areas with many modern characteristics such as diversification within the society, different population groups, and organizations. Generally speaking, as the rural areas are penetrated by market economy and their industrial structure changes, peasants who were once peasants of the people's communes are now divided into three groups (in terms of their relations with the land): local peasants who work in agriculture sector with their families or unions of various forms as work units, industrial workers working locally including workers and managers of township and village enterprises (TVEs), and migrant peasants mainly working in the secondary and tertiary industries. Peasants during social transformation period could be further divided into subgroups according to their occupations. By looking at their occupations, the way they use and how they own the means of production, Lu Xueyi and other Chinese experts in rural issues used peasants from 13 villages to form ten peasant categories: village officials, managers of collectively-owned enterprises (COEs), owners of private enterprises, self-employed, knowledge workers, TVEs employees, agricultural laborers, hired laborers, casual laborers,

and the unemployed.[24] But one view is that the peasants in the traditional sense have already become agricultural laborers, workers of TVEs, migrant workers, hired laborers, workers in the fields of culture, education, science and technology and medical care, self-employed, managers of TVEs, and officials in rural areas.[25] Another view is that the class of peasants comprises of agricultural laborers, laborers working both in industries and in agricultural sector, intellectuals, owners of private enterprises, and hired laborers and officials in rural areas.[26]

Occupational differentiation leads to interest differentiation (wealth gap). In rural areas, the equalitarianism in wealth distribution of wealth is lost, resulting in increasing disparity between the rich and the poor. When people's occupations are relatively stable, the society will see the emergence of different social classes with diverse interests. An unstable occupation cannot form a stable class. What defines a social class? The formation of social classes depends on the possession of the means of production and the recognition of special interests. In the early period of social transformation, the accelerated stratification of social structure in rural areas causes the peasants' occupations to be unstable, thus it was unrealistic to define social classes by occupations. In the middle period of social transformation, occupational differentiation began to slow down and continue to develop in a steady and orderly way. During this period, social classes with stronger demands for their rights to be recognized came into being, resulting in a closer tie between occupation and classes. In the process of social differentiation, the self-employed and private enterprise owners are the two classes that have emerged from the peasant class. This is an important reason why political affairs in rural areas are increasingly interfered by local businessmen in recent years. However, only after analyzing specific cases, can we find out which factor, be it occupational, wealth-related, or organizational, has the greatest influence on people's behavior in the non-institutional participation.

In essence, occupational differentiation is conducive to the development of democratic politics, which cannot be developed on the basis of small peasant economy. It brings the differentiation of interests, which forms the basis for interest articulation. Interest articulation marks the beginning of democratic politics. Similarly, occupational differentiation among peasants is the basis of the development of democratic politics in rural areas. During the period of collectivization of agriculture (1953–1958) and people's commune stage (1958–1984), peasants were able to participate in politics by making use of their personal relations and getting their requests met as a group. Such mode of participation simplified the dynamic and complex political life, thus impeding the sound development of democratic politics. The emergence of occupational classes with different interest demands, however, made rural political life dynamic and complex. From the perspective of social control, several groups and organizations have played very important roles

[24]Lu (1992, 19).

[25]"A Review of Recent Research on Social Mobility," *People's Daily* 14 Feb 1998.

[26]Xie (1998).

in the rural politics: namely the Party and government, self-governing organizations, clan and religious organizations, economic squires (rich peasants, private entrepreneurs, peasant entrepreneurs, etc.), substructure within the organizations, and illegal forces or gangs. Most members of these groups and organizations have stable occupations, a few of which are politically related. For now, the rural democratic political process is still in its nascent stage. Its political environment is far from being healthy, orderly, and legitimate. Generally speaking, different groups of the rural work force, especially private entrepreneurs, peasant entrepreneurs, and village administrators, begin to protect their own interests through various means and approaches. This should be deemed positive for the development of the Chinese rural society.

Two issues brought by occupational differentiation are worth our attention. First is the gap between the rich and the poor. Chinese peasants have been dreaming of a society where wealth is equally distributed for thousands of years. The "new modern peasants" have achieved a rather low standard of "wealth equalization." But the challenge facing those peasants in the transformation period is how to achieve a high standard of "wealth equalization," or in another word, common prosperity. The widening gap between the rich and the poor is caused by problems in our value systems as well as policy issues. The issue of values lies in our understanding of fairness. Does equal distribution means fairness? Several rules must be emphasized. First of all, such fairness must reflect the principle of "efficiency as the first priority." Fairness without efficiency is bound by the shackles of egalitarianism. Any behavior that affects efficiency will sooner or later cause damage to fairness. Secondly, fairness should be based on the principle of "democratic equality." Those who benefit the most should never build their gains on the loss or poverty of those who benefit the least, because the latter group's disadvantage is a result of their own problems and unfavorable natural causes as well as the neglect and disregard coming from their social cooperative system. Thirdly, fairness must reflect justice principle over the property possession. It means that the income or the acquisition of property by an individual should be legal. Any such acquisition without lawful basis should be interfered. Thus, there are at least four ways of achieving fairness, namely acknowledging differences, seeking cooperation, undertaking responsibility, and moderate intervention. As in the area of policy-making, there are several aspects to consider: first, introduce policies to encourage people to accumulate wealth through diligent, legitimate, and legal approaches; secondly, resolutely crack down acts of wealth accumulation through illegal means and act of exploitation by the wealthy; thirdly, establish and optimize an economic system favorable to achieve the goal of common prosperity and to improve peasants' employment rate; fourthly, adjust income disparities among different occupational groups through legal and economic means; fifthly, help to increase the income of those poverty-stricken families.

The other issue is how to view the role of private entrepreneurs who, during the social differentiation process of the peasants, have become a social class. They are the owners of private enterprises with more than eight employees and the means of production. They are the employers who occupy their employees' surplus labor and

control workers, money, and property of the company. They also decide how to run the company and allocate resources. From the perspective of how to view and treat these private entrepreneurs, we have two aspects to pay attention to: first, have private entrepreneurs already formed a new capitalist class in China? To answer this question, we have to analyze the nature of China's political power, and to identify whether this group of people exhibits characteristics as a social class. In terms of China's political regime, it is a socialist country of people's democratic governance, led by the working class and built upon the alliance of workers and peasants. It means that the political power of this country always takes hold of the economic artery, political apparatus, and the initiative to adjust hierarchical relationship between different classes and strata. Therefore, it is not possible for the group of the private entrepreneurs to develop into an independent class; in terms of class characteristics, at the present stage, the private entrepreneurs are not powerful enough to take control of the state apparatus. They have not yet gain a stable economic base in the society. With their former identity as ordinary rural laborer still remains unsevered like an umbilical cord, their social status are not well-established, nor have they shaped their independent social consciousness, not to mention forming an well-organized political power. Moreover, the notion of "private entrepreneurs" is not a fixed but evolving concept. Therefore, private entrepreneurs are not an independent class, nor are they the new-born capitalist class. However, people within this group share similar mode of production and way of life, and personally participate public politics through various means. Secondly, are private entrepreneurs allowed to be admitted into the Party? In August 28, 1989, the CPC Central Committee issued *Notice on Strengthening the Party Building* which demanded for a strict standard for party member's admission and quality control. Although it clearly stated that the party members should draw a clear line between themselves and the private entrepreneurs and "no admission of the private entrepreneurs," in actual implementation, different voices and opinions arose, some of which even encouraged and promoted the admission of private entrepreneurs into the Party.[27] The wealth gap between the rich and the poor and the issue of private entrepreneurs affect the social foundation for political stability, the class foundation for ruling party, and the class condition of Chinese society. These two issues pose obvious influences over the political participation of Chinese peasants.

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[27]On the admission of private entrepreneurs in CPC, see Zhang (1997).

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Chapter 4
Adjustment of the Interest Pattern in Rural Areas and Peasants' Induced Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

The concept of "non-institutional political participation" was raised in Chap. 2 based on the correlation between citizens and institutions in political participation. The institutional school, respectively, defines those institutional changes driven by interests and those driven by the involvement of the government and its laws and decrees as induced institutional changes and mandatory institutional changes. Borrowing terminology from the institutional school, this paper, from the perspective of what causes non-institutional participation, divides non-institutional political participation into two categories: induced non-institutional political participation and mandatory non-institutional political participation. The former refers to the initiation, organization, or use of certain methods by individuals or groups through certain channels to try to influence the political process by irrational behavior, or behaviors which break through existing institutional norms and abnormal behavior, with an aim to gain self-interests. Most of the non-institutional participation of Chinese peasants in the transformation period falls into this category due to its close ties to the change in the interest pattern in China's rural areas during this period. Though induced and mandatory participations are sometimes intertwined together, the research into mandatory non-institutional participation will be discussed in Chap. 5 for the sake of convenience.

On the macrolevel, China's current political institutions have provided strong institutional backing for citizens' political participation, which is sufficient for participating citizens to follow the track of political behavior represented by current structures and accept current norms. As a "highly institutionalized political system," the PRC has also accumulated rich experience in advancing the practice of citizens' political participation. On the meso-level, China's rural institutional development has made progress over the past 20 years of the transformation period by forming the basic framework of rural institutional system. Also, Chinese peasants' non-institutional participation in the transformation period has shown a tendency to expand. On the microlevel, citizens that can be effectively involved

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in institutional arrangements and actively participate in political life remain a tiny minority, with mobilized forms of participation and passive forms of participation found everywhere. At the same time due to the macroinstitutional arrangement, the phenomenon of non-institutional participation has gradually decreased. However, institutional discord on the macro-, meso-, and microlevels in general reflects undersupplied, incomplete, and inadequate institutions.

Based on such background, this paper analyzes peasants' non-institutional political participation in the transformation period.

4.1 Principles and Basic Contents of Citizens' Political Participation Institution

Institutionalization is "a process of organizations and procedures gaining value and stability." The four "standards" of measuring the "institutionalization level of a political system" or the four verification methods are adaptation, integrity, independence, and consistency of organizations and procedures. The objective of institutionalization is cooperation, rationality, and legitimacy.[1] China's political institution has, in a larger sense, provided open channels for the widespread political participation of the general public.

The principles by which the CPC guarantee citizens' political participation are as follows:

(I) Mass Line. Deng Xiaoping said, "I think that the principles of following the Mass Line and seeking truth from facts are of fundamental importance in the style of work advocated by Comrade Mao Zedong."[2] When recalling how the production campaign was launched in the Yan'an days, Deng analyzed, "One reason was that we had requisitioned too much grain from the masses, so that there were complaints among them, which made many party members unhappy. But Comrade Mao Zedong saw things differently. He said that the complaints were justified and were the voice of the masses. He was indeed great and different from the rest of us in that he was able to discern the problems behind the complaints of the masses and formulate the principles and policies required to deal with them. He paid great attention to the opinions, ideas and problems of the masses."[3] These remarks of Deng Xiaoping directly show that the political participation of the masses was within the institutional arrangement of the political system instituted by the CPC. "The voice of the masses" was the response to too much requisition of grain by the then Yan'an government and was actually the masses' expression of interests.

[1] Coase et al. (1994, 271).

[2] *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 2 (1994, 45).

[3] *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 2 (1994, 46).

Considered to be of great historical value by the CPC, the theory of Mass Line is not only a leadership approach and a guiding principle, but has also been encompassed into institutional framework. Jiang Zemin, former leader of the CPC, commented at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee for Discipline Inspection China held in February 1994 that ties forged between the CPC and the public would be a major political concern, which could mean life or death to the CPC and its pursuits. When talking about the issue of "what is politics about," he further explained that from a fundamental perspective, politics was mainly about our attitude toward the public, as well as our relationship with the public. The theory of Mass Line, as briefly explained, contains the following aspects: (i) from the masses, to the masses; (ii) the public's review, approval, and satisfaction shall be the starting point and ending point for each general and specific policy; (iii) discussion of policy issues with the public to bring the public of the entire country into play with zeal and enthusiasm; (iv) always avoid having conflicts with the public, and never discard this working guideline; (v) value the predominant role and pioneering spirit of the general public and protect their democratic rights; and (vi) facilitate the development of democratic centralism system, improve the general public's participation in state and social governance, constantly strengthen supervisory institutions of the CPC and administrative authorities, and maintain close ties with the general public by all CPC members and the administrative units of the party and the government.

(II) Seeking truth from facts. This type of pragmatic methodology can be used as a standard to evaluate the effectiveness of political participation from an objective point of view. It constitutes the essence of theories of Marxism–Leninism and those of Maoism. This ideological guideline of the CPC undertakes an objective approach focusing on reality and truth. Of equal importance, it also leaves room for flexible responses to social changes, thus facilitating the development of a very strong reliance to the CPC from new members and existing ones as well, which further ensures the success of revolution, nation building, and reform led by the CPC. Deng Xiaoping once commented that it is the principle of "seeking truth from facts" that propelled the inclusion of non-institutional political participation into an institutional framework, when talking about the drastic changes brought by peasants to existing social system in the transformation period. "Our reform and opening up could never be achieved by following text books; instead, it relies on practice, and shall be carried out following the "seeking truth from facts" guideline. The household responsibility system was created by the peasants; and many other good practices have originated from the grassroots level in rural areas. Thus, the accumulated experiences could then be further promoted to guide the development of other areas in our nation. Practice is the only criterion for judging the truth. I did not receive higher education, yet I am confident in the reasonable grounds of reality-based methodology put forward by Chairman Mao. Just as in the past we achieved all the victories in

our revolution by following this principle, today we must also rely on it in our efforts to accomplish nation building and reform."[4] This reality-based principle contains four elements: (i) Decisions must be based on ample understanding and consideration of objective facts. Never detach from realities in history, and actively discard the metaphysical and dogmatic aspects of previous policy-making philosophies; (ii) respect objective national conditions, and identify intrinsic links that exist between history and present through an objective, scientific study of history; (iii) integrate theory with practice, and adhere to the principle that practice is the only criterion for verifying truth and correctness; and (iv) facilitate the emancipation of the mind by breaking the shackles of previous beliefs or biased opinions under the guidance of Marxism, thus achieving unity of theory and practice, and unity of subjectivity and objectivity with which to study emerging conditions and solve new problems arising in different social situations.

(III) Serving the Chinese people wholeheartedly. The CPC is committed to serving the interests of the people, and never its own interest. With serving the people wholeheartedly as its sole purpose, each member of the CPC shall duly perform his duties under the guidance of this principle, and any deviation from this purpose would deny eligibility as a CPC member. All CPC members and officials are thus required to devote every moment of their professional life to boosting the welfare and livelihoods of the general public, as strictly stipulated in the rules of regulations of the CPC and also frequently presented by the CPC leaders. (In China, the speech of CPC leaders would always extend a significant impact upon key policy-making activities, or be perceived as a policy presentation itself.)

As Jiang Zemin presented in the report at the 15th CPC National Congress, "To work for the people's interests wholeheartedly is the starting point as well as the purpose of all our work for building socialism with Chinese characteristics."[5] "We are striving to advance toward the ultimate objective, the realization of communism. Those who forget this lofty goal are not qualified party members and neither are those who do not devote themselves to achieving the Party's mission in the primary stage of socialism."[6] Established as a basic value orientation and code of conduct, the principle of serving the Chinese people wholeheartedly has remained consistent and stable in the history of the building up of the CPC, as follows: (i) The CPC are committed to a government of the people, by the people and for the people. For instance, during China's democratic evolution, the armed force of the CPC had been honored as the "people's army," demonstrating close attachment between the CPC and the public. After it became the ruling party in China, the CPC members have identified themselves as "public servants"; (ii) CPC members

[4] *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3 (1993, 382).

[5] Jiang (1997, 54–55).

[6] Jiang (1997, 54–55).

shall listen attentively to the opinions of the public and help to solve their problems and difficulties in a practical manner; (iii) CPC members, especially officials, shall properly execute their power and authority granted by the public and shall only apply such powers in the interest of the public wholeheartedly, and never in exchange for their own personal interests; (iv) before making a decision, an in-depth practical investigation adhering to the Mass Line shall be carried out to ensure consistent accountability to the general public as well as to supervisory bodies; (v) decisions and policies shall be made upon the approval of the public, relying on their judgment and designed for the realization of their interests; and (vi) respect shall be given to the practical experiences and pioneering spirit of the general public, whose practices and innovations are inexhaustible source of strength for the CPC.

On the basis of the aforementioned principles, the CPC has established a series of fundamental institutional structures to ensure the political participation of the public. In fact, since its founding, the CPC has been dedicated to motivating the public to take an active role in political life. Here are the four examples of the CPC, prior to governing the entire country, striving to take every possible opportunity to build democratic regimes, create various organizational mechanisms, and allow the public to exercise their rights, establishing institutions using the political participation of the masses into a standardized trajectory: (i) During the Chinese Nationalist Revolution (1924–1927), almost all peasants within numerous townships in Hunan Province were involved in peasant associations, which assumed collective rights; (ii) during the first phase of the Chinese Civil War (1927–1937), the CPC established the Soviet Republic of China, which adopted a worker–peasant–soldier representative congress system, allowing workers, peasants, and soldiers to take part in democratic elections; (iii) during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), the CPC took a "three-thirds system" to forge an extensive anti-Japanese united front, with one-third of the assembly seats going to party members, one-third to leftists, and one-third to political neutralists, the inclusion of whom were all realized by means of direct elections within the border regions; and (iv) during the final phase of the Chinese Civil War (1945–1949), the CPC adopted a direct voting system for the People's Congress that allowed free expression of political opinions of the general public within the region it had gained control. The aforementioned systems created before 1949 were all designed to motivate the general public to take an active role in political life and to provide them with legitimate channels to express their views. And the political systems adopted after the CPC became the ruling party in 1949 have further offered even more approaches for extensive political participation of the general public. As stipulated in China's constitution, all power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people, thus the system of people's congress has constituted the fundamental political system in modern China. The system of people's congress is a political regime designed to achieve people's democratic

dictatorship, with the people's congresses established at different levels through regular elections by the Chinese people of all nationalities under the principle of democratic centralism, and other state organs created by respective levels of the people's congresses, through which the people exercise state power. The system was established based on the following major principles: (i) all power belong to the Chinese people, (ii) under the leadership of the CPC, (iii) with democratic centralism, and (iv) equality and unity among all ethnic groups. Apart from the system of people's congress, other major political systems in China include the following: (i) electoral system, which is based on universal and equal suffrage, a combination of direct and indirect elections, and anonymous voting; (ii) the direct participation mechanism, which refers to a series of political systems, such as employee representative assemblies, administrative petition systems, and self-governance at the grassroots level, aimed at ensuring direct involvement of the general public in the governance of state and social affairs in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations; and (iii) the multiparty cooperation and political consultation system. The political systems mentioned above have encompassed organizations and procedures that are independent in their operation, and responsive to changing needs and circumstances, and thus have jointly created a basic institutional environment for extensive participation of the general public in political life.

Since the founding of the PRC, great efforts have been made to promote and institutionalize political participation, largely arousing the public's enthusiasm for participating in politics and providing them with channels for participation. These efforts are as follows. First, critical importance was placed on education in macropolitical values. Macropolitical values refer to the basic attitudes and evaluation of politics. The PRC has attached great importance to "enlightenment" education of citizens in socialist democracy, repeatedly and clearly making citizens aware that "the Chinese people are the master of their country" and of the superiority of socialist democracy. Citizens were called on to concern themselves with national affairs and exercise their sacred rights as the master of their country. Citizens had never heard of elections or voted before the founding of the PRC, but after the voter turnout in each election was over 90 %, indicating the significant effect of this "enlightenment" education. Second, forms and channels of political participation were established. The PRC valued the political rights of citizens and ensured the exercise of each civic right by implementing or allowing the citizens to establish different forms of participation, such as voting and elections, joining political parties or social organizations, publishing reviews of national affairs, meeting political leaders or participating in community activities. Nearly each of these forms had its corresponding channel of participation. For example, citizens could participate in voting and elections through the people's congress. Other channels of participation included mass media channels, grassroots democratic autonomy, and consulting and think-tank organizations. These channels of participation made it possible for citizens

from all walks of life including those of different educational backgrounds and social groups with access to different participation resources to enter the political procedures and exercise their democratic rights. Third, the material progress of political participation was emphasized. The achievements of material progress including universal education, a raised education background, enhanced participation skills, and increased sense of modern democracy all helped to develop and improve the infrastructure needed for political participation such as public transportation and communications. Moreover, it also raised the public's sense of participation, competition, and the feeling of being the master of their country.[7]

4.2 Institutional Arrangement for Peasants' Political Participation

The basic system of Mass Line, seeking truth from facts, serving the people wholeheartedly, and ensuring people's political participation and practical experience in institutionalizing political participation, has provided a wide range of methods to institutionalize the peasants' political participation and created favorable institutional environments and conditions. In the transformation period, the institutional development in rural areas made new progress and the basic framework of the institutional system came into being. This created a favorable environment for Chinese peasants' political participation. After the reform and opening up, the institutional arrangement for peasants' political participation consisted of the following:

(i) Village organization system with CPC branch as the core, including the "Three-assembly (the Party branch convention, Party branch committee and Party group meeting) and the One-lecture (the Party lecture)" system, civic appraisal of party members, the cadre system, the party members and officials goal management system, a system of communication between party members and households, a fluid management system of party members, goal management system for village officials by term, the villagers committee, cooperative economic organizations, the Communist Youth League, as well as woman's organizations and militia system.

(ii) A democratic political system focusing on the village council, including democratic elections, the village council, democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision. In Shandong Province, for example, the village council system was established and implemented in 74,000 villages, accounting for 85 % of all villages.

[7]Li and Liu (1997).

(iii) An economic management system focusing on financial management, mainly including the rural financial management system, collective asset management system and contract management system. Rural finance was the peasants' greatest concern. Financial disclosure, "double management," and rural audit were necessary for strengthening rural financial management. Financial disclosure refers to the supervision, verification, and publishing of rural finances on a regular basis by a financial management team composed of villager representatives. The term "double management" means that the township financial management station managed both the accounts and funds. Rural auditing was conducted by the township financial management station, including preaccount auditing, regular auditing, key auditing, and auditing of cadre retirement.

(iv) Social affairs management systems, mainly including systems for public disclosure of village affairs, social order management, and rural social security. System for public disclosure of village affairs comprises mainly of village financial revenue and expenditure, labor and expense borne by peasants, land and industrial project contracting, homestead examination and approval, family planning indicators, and payment for village officials. Means of public disclosure vary according to actual conditions through meetings for CPC members, the announcement of major events by village representatives and villagers or through handing out documents, government affairs columns, public consultation papers, radio, and TV for supervision of the rural public.

(v) Systems for self-governance by villagers with the main focus on statutes, which include rules and regulations for village and villagers, a system of villager' archive management, and star-rated model households.

These institutional arrangements have inspired enthusiasm for the rural public to participate in economic and social management. The rural institutional development, in particular the development of democratic political systems with democratic characteristics and transparency, significantly promotes socialist democracy through such basic principles as carrying out elections, policy-making, management, and supervision. By providing channels of participation for decision-making and management, peasants, as masters of their villages, participate with fully expressed opinions and have developed a stronger sense of social responsibility. Public supervision over leadership has been intensified and village officials have developed a closer relationship with peasants. Village officials are representatives of the CPC and the Chinese government among the peasants, and their prestige is directly impacted by their behaviors and the image they project. The institutional development has put village officials under the supervision of peasants. Making the management and policy-making more apparent has regulated officials' behaviors, prompted officials to show concern for peasants, and thus strengthened their communication and ties. All kinds of contradictions have been made easier to resolve, which ensures the orderly development of rural economy and society. The rural institutional development has promoted village officials to follow the principles of democracy, transparency, and rule of law. Making sure that peasants

are informed of village affairs helps officials to expand villagers' channels of participation, leading to more democratic and science-based policy decisions. In the meantime, peasants have taken the initiative to become more active in participating in village affairs management, preventing the leadership from enjoying sole decision-making power.

In the 3rd Plenary Session of the 15th CPC Central Committee, the development of grassroots democracy and legal system in rural areas was emphasized. The Session proposed: "Democracy shall be expanded to cover more rural areas in order to mobilize a greater number of peasants to participate in the development of reforms and other causes." Efforts shall be made in promoting election, decision-making, rural management, and supervision in a democratic and all-round way at the village level. The Session also points out that "Institutional development lies at the core of self-governance of peasants. The main focus should be improving the democratic election system of the village committee, the democratic negotiation system featured with villagers' meeting or meeting of village representatives and a democratic supervision system with the main focus on disclosure of village affairs, democratic deliberation and a villagers committee. Village affairs should follow the rules and regulations to promote the regulated system of villagers' self-governance." At the town and township level, "Democratic development at the township level is an important part of rural democracy. The system of direct election by representatives of National People's Congress shall be improved for implementation."[8]

In China, a good number of varied institutions have been developed to provide and support political participation channels. Peasants, however, favor non-institutional participation for their own interests, which often lead to greater consequences. The main reasons peasants seek or rely on non-institutional participation include their inadequate understanding about institutions, lack of confidence in the effectiveness of political participation, the capacity of local officials at all levels and the inadequateness of the institutions themselves.

(I) Peasants' inadequate understanding of political participation

An institution is in fact a resource, and the effectiveness of an institution depends largely on how effectively this resource has been used, which further depends on how adequately people understand it. Constrained by their general education level and limited ability to see where problems lie, peasants do not have a clear understanding of their own interests and also have difficulty to articulate their interests clearly. Even if they had a good understanding of their interests, or was able to claim their interests clearly, their inadequate level of knowledge in national policies and regulations caused by insufficient and improper way of top–down policy dissemination would make it difficult for them to safeguard their interests through institutional channels.

[8]"The Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Several Major Issues in Agriculture and Rural Work" adopted at the Third Plenum of the 15th CPC Central Committee on October 14, 1998, *People's Daily* 19 Oct. 1998.

(II) Peasants' low confidence in institutional political participation

Peasants have low social status and are a disadvantaged group in resource distribution due to their low education level. As a result, they show little confidence in institutional participation and tend to realize their interests by non-institutional and unconventional participation. They believed that only by these forms of participation could they achieve the maximum effectiveness of political participation. Therefore, peasants depend more on non-institutional participation than institutional participation.

(III) Capability of the local government officials

The capability of the local government officials refers to at least the following two aspects: first, the officials' understanding of policies and regulations and their ability to implement these policies and regulations; second, the officials' working styles.

The local officials' understanding of policies and regulations has direct impact on policy implementation. For example, a lack of proper understanding often causes local administrative measures to be inconsistent with relevant policies and regulations; it could also cause resistance to policies and regulations that may shake up local interests and conflicts and disputes in policy implementation that are caused by different interpretation of policies and regulations by different departments. These situations often confuse peasants when they seek to participate in politics through institution.

Maintaining close ties with the public and seeking truth from facts are basic principles used by the CPC when it institutionalize, public political participation and thus serves as important guarantees for effective public participation. However, the reality is largely on the contrary. Bureaucracy and red tape often prevent local officials from listening to their people or serving their needs, to the point when they turn a blind eye to the public's legitimate interest articulation. Moreover, buck-passing between departments seriously hampers government's work efficiency, making the people, especially peasants, impatient and lose faith in political participation. This is one of the important reasons why peasants don't find their participation being effective. How capable local officials are will ultimately determine the use of institutional resources.

(IV) Defects of the institution itself

Institutional development in rural areas still faces a number of problems. (i) The current system is not well-established. It emphasizes too much on how work should be done rather than how it should be managed; there are too many provisions in the regulation, while supporting measures are lacking; it regulates people more than it regulates government officials; (ii) there are still some unnecessary government functions, and officials carrying out such functions are less coordinated; (iii) the problem of formalism is severe; and (iv) the institutions often stay unchanged and cannot make adjustment for peasants' changing needs.

4.3 Adjustment of the Interest Pattern in Rural Areas During the Transformation Period

Overall, Chinese peasants have many institutional channels and ways to participate in politics, though there are no proper procedures and regulations to address such issues as how to specifically express individual's political will, how to express people's concern about the country and execute democratic rights, and how to fight for individual rights through political means. Besides, for decades, peasants were asked and mobilized to participate in politics. Therefore, they are not savvy enough to participate on their own and often have limited channels to articulate their interests. In particular, the adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas during China's transformation period has led to the increase in non-institutional participation by peasants. What's more, such change has resulted in the increase of induced political participation.

Interest is a generalized social concept. Generally speaking, anything that can meet people's material or spiritual needs can be called an interest. When interests are achieved, people's needs are met.[9] There are all kinds of interests. The adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas during China's transformation period was triggered by peasants' initiative to change how interests were distributed back then. The adjustment occurred in the following ways:

(i) As peasants enjoy more autonomy and become more self-aware and as their individual rights begin to diverge from collective ones, the once hidden interest-based relations peasants had with the country and the collective have become more apparent. In terms of economic interests, the production and business operation methods, the profit-sharing mechanism, and the way products are exchanged in rural areas have all undergone fundamental changes during the transformation period. In terms of operation methods, the peasants' family businesses and individual businesses hold a big share in the rural economy. As to the profit-sharing mechanism, the current situation is that "peasants turn over enough to the country and the collective while keeping the rest to the individual," making the interest-based relations among the three parties clear and straightforward. As to the way products are exchanged, all agricultural products except ordered grains are now traded in the market. Since the discrepancy between peasants' individual rights and the interests of the country and rural communities has become more apparent, cases of peasants' interest violation have thus becoming extremely sensitive and prominent. In addition, as peasants become highly autonomous in voicing their interests and rights in terms of security, politics, and culture, a lack of efficient regulating measures may result in conflicts between peasants' interests and those of the country and communities.

[9] Yan (1996, 10).

(ii) The overt self-interest behavior of public authorities and interests departmentalization has caused complex and interwoven interest-based relations of departments, ranging from the central government down to the county/city governments, and from town and township governments in rural areas down to administrative villages. There is actually a bilateral monopoly between the higher public authorities and the lower ranking ones,[10] with the higher authorities depending on the political support of the lower ranking, and the latter in turn depending on the services of the other. Under the planned economy system, the higher and lower departments share relatively common interests, leaving no room for self-interest behavior. However, under the market economy system, power is decentralized and departments are self-financed. Public authorities at all levels have their own interests, thus giving way to the self-interest behavior and interest departmentalization. Once the self-interest behavior grows unchecked, the interest-driven conflicts between different departments emerge and each department act on its own with no unified policies. The burden the peasants bear is a typical example. The central government has the country's political interest at heart, while local governments, especially governments at the county and township levels, give more consideration to their own economic interests. As a result, the definition of 5 % of the county coordinating expense paid by peasants has never been settled, although it is said to be reduced every year. A peasant jingle best illustrates the different interests of the public authorities, "the best policy comes from the central government, the peasant-centered policy from the provincial government, the most reasonable leaders are at the county government, nd the most wicked leaders are at the township and town government." The interest ladder goes from the higher authorities down to the town and township governments and then all the way to village authorities, thus expanding the interest-driven conflicts. At present, the number of township and town organizations directly established by departments at the county level and above is gradually increasing, with about 30 organizations at medium-sized township and town level. All organizations are directly administered by county departments with different administrative authority. The excessive number of departments is seemingly designed for specialization, with each department fulfilling specific duties. On the other hand, rural labor is carried out within the village as a community, while peasants focus on their individual interests. This fragmentation triggers a lot of conflicts. The interest-driven conflicts become more complicated, as the central government raises fiscal revenue to comprehensively push forward modernization, and public authorities' self-interest behaviors emerge, such as "free-ride" behaviors at town and township government levels, which are considered "bad practices."

(iii) Interest demands become diversified. First, with the rapid development of market economy, division of labor and occupational differentiation in rural areas

[10]Coase et al. (1994, 343).

are strongly enforced. The diversified occupational differentiation gives rise to diverse interests in relation to policy and value, etc. Moreover, as the CPC's policies to enrich the people have rendered significant results in rural areas, bettering some more than others and thus enlarging the affluence gap, the peasants' demands for their own interests become diverse. Furthermore, since the household responsibility system was adopted in rural areas, collective social activities greatly decreased, while population mobility increased, making social activities more dispersed and peasants' demands for interests diversified. The diversification of interests leads to a more complicated environment for political participation. For instance, the diversified occupational differentiation leaves rural officials with a double identity, who are peasants as well as administrators of rural areas. As peasants, village officials want to safeguard their individual interests while as administrators, it is their job to safeguard collective interests. Rural officials have the authoritative right of distributing benefits of rural collective economy. In virtue of the collective, region-oriented, and comprehensive[11] nature of collective economy, village officials are required to use collective economy as a guarantee for common prosperity in rural areas, the material basis for strengthening the influence and cohesiveness of peasant organizations, instead of as way of seeking self-interest. When self-interest and collective interest are at odds, rural officials may become corrupt, which may prompt the peasants' need for political participation. During the transformation period, this conflict is often the trigger for non-institutional participation.

During the transformation period in China, the interest pattern in rural areas has changed to a more complicated and diversified form. Peasants now feel that they have a kind of power they had never possessed before, self-determination, and awareness of one's rights. Thus they are more eager get involved in the country's political process out of consideration of their self-interests. Involving in the country's political process may facilitate this interest-driven behavior to develop steadily, rationally, and moderately for a long time. During the transformation period, peasants' right to self-determination gradually turns into an institutionalized power, involving them in modern society, since rights lie at the core of modern citizenship and are a structural element of modern social system. Rights are the lawful and ethical recognition of legitimate interests. They are the entitlement to ethical and legal recognition and protection of interests, but they also imply the requirement to fulfill corresponding duties. The value of rights lies in transforming the need to safeguard individual dignity and interests into an institutionalized power, which obliges rights-holders (such as people, governments and states) to bear corresponding duties and makes duties a requirement supported by the coercive power of the state. The interest pattern in rural areas has changed, but the society still lacks relevant institutions to regulate the channels or ways for interest articulation, thus prompting peasants' non-institutional political participation to increase significantly.

[11]Li (1994, 129–130).

4.4 Characteristics and Trends of Peasants' Induced Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

Non-institutional political participation is an inevitable part of participating in political life. An expanded non-institutional political participation during the transformation period is often observed, whose political system has an institutional capacity as a decisive element. In the aforementioned chapters, we have elaborated on the aspects of institutional capacity of China's political system, institutional development in rural areas during the transformation period, and the adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas, thus laying a theoretical and practical foundation for our further research into which factors induce peasants' non-institutional participation.

4.4.1 Analysis of Factors Inducing Peasants' Non-institutional Participation

The primary factor which induces peasants' non-institutional participation during the transformation period is the protection and realization of their existing interests. The secondary factor comes from the pursuit of maximum potential interests. Their induced non-institutional participation has created a breakthrough in the "lagging supply," and has provided inspiration for institutional innovations and new arrangements. Pursuit of interests, by either acting out individually or collectively, is the motivation for peasants to proactively change existing rules and procedures for political participation. Where the original institutional structure presents as unbalanced, peasants have no way to acquire or receive their interests from it and are threatened with losses, non-institutional participation behavior emerges. Under these circumstances, certain institutional arrangements become ineffective within the existing institutional framework, or that a specific arrangement could no longer effectively fit within a complete system. In other words, induced non-institutional political participation occurs when peasants cannot protect their own interests or cannot receive expected returns within the original institutional framework.

There has been a trend toward increasingly expansive induced non-institutional political participation of peasants during the transformation period, which reveals the slow adjustment of institutional arrangement for peasants' political participation on the one hand, and the sluggish response of the government on the other. In other words, there always exists "time lags" between the emergence of the non-institutional participation and its inclusion into the institutional participation framework. The first time lag happens during the "identification and organization" period of peasants' induced non-institutional political participation, which indicates the period between its emergence and escalation. The second is concerned

with the "recognition" by decision-makers before any effective response is made. This inherently relies on the competencies of decision-makers, especially on their policy wisdom and sense of responsibility. The third time lag is incurred by "menu selection," indicating time spent in search of solutions that resolve the issue and satisfy participants' underlying interests. The fourth is associated with "activation" of actions, which refers to the period between the final selection of best viable practices or institutional arrangements and the start of their real operation.[12] Due to institutional imbalance, induced non-institutional participation is a proactive action motivated by the protection of self-interests through abnormal channels and means. "Four factors may instigate institutional imbalance from a certain balancing point as follows: (i) change of a selected set of institutions, (ii) technology update, (iii) shift in demands for institutional support, and (iv) other changes in institutional arrangements. Each of the above four factors could be further divided into several integral elements."[13] The break of institutional balance of the traditional planned economy was initiated by peasants' induced non-institutional participation, or more specifically, their proactive contract management by household. This practice drove China into a transformation period and was followed by a series of institutional innovations and new arrangements.

As induced non-institutional participation emerges as a bottom-up, spontaneous process, it is very likely to be "duplicated" when efforts are not in place to shorten the "time lag" and to involve it into institutional framework in the shortest time period possible. This explains what triggers "civil disorders" or chain reactions. It can be deemed as a phenomenon of "duplication." Apart from the aforementioned competencies of decision-makers who detect the issue, the willingness of the participants to cooperate is another factor that determines the inclusion of induced non-institutional participation into the institutional framework. Thus, it would be very unlikely to realize the inclusion if participants were intended to pursue excessive potential benefits, decision-makers encounter difficulty in making reconciliation, or decision-makers believe they are paying exceedingly high prices to do so. In short, the inclusion of induced non-institutional participation into the institutional system mainly depends on the allocation of potential interests between participants and decision-makers. The mobility of participants can indicate the scope and size of peasants' induced non-institutional participation.

From a general perspective, peasants' induced non-institutional participation emerges when they cannot withstand their interests being jeopardized any longer. Their main purpose is to change the unbearable existing situation in the most rapid and direct manner, and their acts are targeted at local village administrators, government bodies, or specific institutional arrangements, rather than at the legitimacy of ruling power or the fundamental political system. The peasants can become a strong force to support the current system, yet they can also turn into a pioneering destructive group to destroy the existing institutional structure or arrangements.

[12] *Property Rights and Institutional Change*, 315–320.

[13] Ibid., 384.

Such a switch depends on to what extent the current system is able to satisfy their needs, particularly their immediate and practical interests. There has been an increasing willingness on the part of peasants to take part in political life with economic and social development and political progress in rural areas.

4.4.2 Characteristics of Peasants' Induced Non-institutional Participation

Peasants' induced non-institutional participation during the transformation period is closely related to the adjustment of the interest pattern in rural areas. As a result of ongoing social and economic development in rural areas and the continuous improvement of the rural institutional system, peasants' induced non-institutional participation is increasingly included into institutional framework. Overall, induced non-institutional participation of peasants has displayed several characteristics during the transformation period as follows:

The first of these is the forming of a hierarchy. The increasing complex of professional specialization and social stratification during the transformation period has led to a widening income discrepancy, which further entails a hierarchy of needs in rural individuals and groups. Thus, it is the pursuit of interests based on a hierarchy that determines the differentiation of induced non-institutional participation. For instance, individuals and each of the groups, such as self-governing communities, village clan communities, religious groups, economic groups, and illegal groups, do not all pursue similar interests when involved in induced non-institutional participation; and the same applies to the rich and the poor. Here is another example of induced non-institutional participation based on the hierarchy. An ordinary peasant may become primarily motivated by economic incentives, while a peasant who previously served as a village administrator might be driven by political interests. Some village administrators detach themselves from the Party after they leave their position, which is mainly demonstrated in three aspects: (i) Some previous administrators may become an obstructive force for the implementation of CPC decisions and policies. For example, they may refuse to undertake tasks assigned by the village committee, or do not proactively finish it when they accept a task. Even worse, they deliberately place obstacles or set up barriers that impede the implementation of CPC's policies and decisions; (ii) asmall number of previous village administrators have played a very disgraceful role in putting the CPC's connection with the public in jeopardy. They intend to instigate controversies and conflicts between the CPC and the public by excessively accusing improper working methods or corruptive behavior of CPC members, and intend undermine the CPC's close ties with the public; and (iii) certain previous village officials even pull strings behind the scenes to jeopardize the leadership of the CPC. For example, some manipulated clan activities through compiling genealogical charts and identifying clansmen; some instigated group violence in the name of protecting collective land and mineral ownership; some asserted to fight

for people's democratic rights and invoked illegal gatherings of people that lacked basic understanding of the situation, jeopardizing the leadership of the CPC. Several reasons lie behind the phenomenon that village officials detach themselves from the Party after leaving their positions. On the subjective level, due to improper understanding of their own weaknesses and the organization's arrangement, their mental outlook becomes impeded, which further leads to transgressions in behaviors. Therefore, the induced non-institutional political participation is invoked by their psychological needs, manifested mainly in the following kinds of unhealthy mental outlooks. The first is non-compliance. They think too highly of themselves and refuse to obey the orders of new leaders. The second is resentment. Instead of reflecting on their own transgressions, they put the blame on the organization and new leaders, accusing them of being driven by prejudice and revenge to impose dismissals. Therefore, the dismissed administrators sow discord between party leaders and peasants in order to vent their own grievances. The third is confrontation. Feeling unjustified and indignant, individual township leaders develop antagonism toward the Party and government, which is instigated further by some rural party organizations who pay less than enough attention to and deal with them in an inappropriate manner, causing them to look for ways to stir up trouble. Average peasants are devoid of interest requirements in this respect.

The second is variety. Peasants focus on different aspects of interests during the transformation period, including areas in economy, safety, politics, culture and community, leading to varied forms of induced non-institutional participation. For example, for safety reasons, average peasants would actively participate in informal organizations when feeling the institution is unable to guarantee protection and just treatment. Another example is that renowned households in a single village have the control over the election thanks to their family influence, while peasants with no power may revert to cult-like organizations for refuge.

The third is complexity. Due to conflicting interests, the induced non-institutional participation of peasants shows great complexity in two aspects. First, it is an embodiment of deeply rooted conflicts. The peasants' non-institutional participation has its institutional, structural, and social roots, which in respect are weaknesses in the current systems and policies, some weakened elements within the rural systems, and the disconnection between economic and societal development. It is also affected by the imbalances in the macroenvironment. Second, the channels and ways of peasants' participation are complex, varying from individual petitions to mass incidents, from illicit parades to illegal organizations, from money-related political interference to abuse of power in administration, and from illegal utilization of formal organizations to unorganized participation. For example, in 1995, the voter turnout at the village level for the village committee elections in Zaozhuang City, Shandong Province, reached over 94.2 %, with more than 98 % of the villages successfully completed the elections. This result was greatly contributed to the arrangement of the party committees, people's congresses, and governments at all levels as well as their strict adherence to laws and regulations. However, elections in 60 villages still failed, which accounted for 1.9 % of all the village committees in Zaozhuang. After the election, the Zaozhuang Civil Affairs

Bureau conducted a survey on the sixty villages. As suggested by the analysis of the survey, the main reasons for the unsuccessful elections were as follows. Among the above 60 villages, 27 of them, or 45 %, were affected by powerful family clans in the election. Different clans show off strength in the village-level elections to support their own representatives in their interests. The open or secret rivalry and canvassing dispersed the votes, as a result of which no candidates obtained more than half of the votes, or over half votes but less than the required votes in the case of elections for three positions. In some villages, those who once failed the election or the former village officials who erred and were dismissed drew over the voters and took secret actions to sabotage the election. Their intention was that "I don't want others to get what I couldn't." It was also found that some villages' leaders are of the older generation. Thus, the new generation who were ambitious yet gained little support from the villagers deliberately played dirty tricks or even got into fights or smashed the ballot box. For example, after learning they had not won the election, several young men in Qianshibei Village started to quarrel with other villagers, which was later taken to fighting, and ended up smashing the ballot box. Two renowned families in Fushan Village of Wangzhuang Town could not agree on whether to elect by households or universal suffrage. Officials at the township and district levels tried several times to help the sides reach a consensus, but to no avail. In Panshigou, Shizixing, and Manzhuang villages of Sangcun Town, the interference with the election by family interests was very prominent. Two rounds of voting went awry because of it. Other reasons for failed elections were poor organizing in 11 villages and designated voting in 17 villages, accounting for 18.3 and 28.3 %, respectively.[14]

The fourth is intermittence and amateurish nature. In general, peasants' induced non-institutional political participation stems from certain interests and thus takes into account costs and benefits. Peasants are naturally bound to their land, so their participation can never be continuous. A peasant surnamed Cui from Shandong Province paid a high price for petitioning to the government for over 20 times. An article entitled "Done with Petitioning" in *People's Daily* on October 21, 1998, told us his story.

Bleakness and desperation reigned in the small courtyard protected by no walls. The main rooms had dilapidated walls. The two rooms on the east side were weathered out of shape due to years of disrepair. A small hut supported by wooden pegs and thin film served as the owner's bedroom. This was where Cui from Jiangzhuang Village of Jü County in Shandong Province lived.

On the afternoon of November 23, 1982, 35-year-old Cui, the village doctor, came home after selling medicine downtown, only to find to his utter surprise that the two rooms which served as a small pharmacy had been sealed off. Cui had had a dispute with the village leadership about an account totaling 180 RMB and all previous negotiations had ended in failure. His pharmacy had been forcibly closed down. Grieved and angry, he started on a long journey of petitioning, seeking a "reasonable explanation."

[14] *Tribune of Villages and Townships* 2 (1997).

Cui had been petitioning to relevant departments at central, provincial, municipal and county levels for 16 years. He had been to Beijing over 20 times. The trips had cost him a great deal of money, with the longest one lasting seven months.

Cui's persistent petitioning had plunged his family into utter misery. In order to keep "the scene" intact, he had never once set foot in the two eastern rooms for sixteen years. The drugs stored in there went moldy. Everything was covered in dirt and cobwebs and there were tiles scattered all over. The simple hut put up in the courtyard could barely provide shelter from bad weather, but the family of six lived in it for sixteen years. Cui's wife, who had worked as a teacher in a private school, had to give up her job to support his petitioning. The whole family was plunged into misery without proper food or housing. On August 15, 1994, their youngest child received the admission letter from the School of Music of Shandong University of Arts. But regrettably, the school fee was more than what the family could afford. The Cui family used to enjoy great fortune and, in 1982, was one of the first families in the village to install a well that could draw underground water. Back then Cui had even bought floor slabs and was preparing to build new rooms for their house. But all this was gone now and the situation worsened by the day as Cui started on his long journey of petitioning for an explanation.

Years of petitioning had taught the now hoary Cui lots of bitter lessons. Thanks to the local party committee and government, he finally decided to forget the past and start a new life. He is now helping people in neighboring villages with their ailments, performing acupuncture and Chinese traditional massages. He felt guilty for not being able to attend to the sick all these years of petitioning and he finally found some solace in repaying what he felt he owed to the villagers. Cui said tearfully: "I'll start a new life now. I am done with petitioning!"

4.4.3 Trends of Peasants' Induced Non-institutional Participation During the Transformation Period

Most cases of peasants' induced non-institutional participation during the transformation period are triggered by individuals' striving for short-term material benefits and then gradually escalating to larger scale incidents, featuring several general trends, as follows:

(I) From regular petition to demonstration or civil disorder. The peasants' attack on the local governments in Qidong County of Hunan Province in 1996 is an example. From July 5 to September 16, several mass incidents occurred in nine towns and townships including Hezhou Town, with buildings and office equipment of six governments being smashed and damaged. The lives of 79 village officials were under threat and their houses plundered. The personal and official property that was stolen, destroyed, or burned in the incidents amounted to over 240,000 RMB in total. A group of people with ulterior motives took advantage of the peasants' demonstrations in some towns and

townships of Qidong County to start havoc by overturning cars, holding administrators and police officers hostages, blocking national highways, and cutting off telecommunications.

(II) From individual/single incidents to group/multiple incidents. This trend refers to the "imitation" phenomenon which frequently happens in peasants' induced non-institutional participation. Using the same example from Qidong County: in July 1996, the peasants in Taojin Village, Hezhou Town, were ordered to pay 60 RMB per person in three days to raise money for evaluations of general knowledge and basic skills; otherwise, they would have to pay an extra 30 % as a penalty. This caused a lot of dissatisfaction and peasants in some villages initiated protests against the local governments. Shortly after things settled down in Hezhou similar incidents followed in another eight towns and townships.

In recent years, the number of mass incidents has increased exponentially. Generally, there are four types of venues through which peasants launch petitions to reach their goals: (i) blatant demonstrations in public areas seeking to exert pressure on authorities in order to achieve their petitioning goals, for example, the petition of a peasant surnamed Zhang in Gaoliangdian Township, Xinyang County of Henan Province, a story which ran in the newspapers. In June 1993, Zhang instigated seven other peasants who were dissatisfied with the town government's forced promotion of silkworm breeding to topple a local party chief. They showed up at Tian'anmen Square wearing clothes with "Petition of Henan Peasants" on them and caused considerable political effect; (ii) during conferences and meeting sessions with large attendance and significant influence so as to exert pressure on relevant departments; (iii) during high-ranking officials' visits or investigations into local governments' work, making use of their power to push local officials to respond to the petitions. For example, on December 8, 1995, over 100 peasants in Gangling Village of a rural county surrounded an official coming to investigate a local artifact factory. Demanding "justice for peasants," they reported to him that the village officials embezzled public funds and demanded they be punished immediately; and (iv) petitioning right after a new official assumes position. The petitioners take advantage of the new official's lack of awareness to the local situation and make the first move to achieve their goals. A secretary surnamed Qin in the Party Committee of Nongke Village was dismissed because he violated the one-child policy. As a result he held a grudge against the town party committee secretary. In January 1996, a new county secretary assumed office and Qin took the opportunity to lead dozens of people to petition on him on his third day in office. They went down on their knees in the compound of the CPC Committee building and accused the town party committee secretary of having taken bribes and having exploited peasants. Their petitioning stirred a lot of attention and caused negative influence.[15]

[15] *Collected Writings on Party Building* 5 (1997).

Nowadays, in addition to raising a wide range of complex issues that may deeply affect the social and political stability in rural areas, mass incidents (group petitioning) have taken on some new features. First, an increasing number of people participate in them and build momentum by putting up banners like "Punish corrupted officials and reduce our burden," "Fight against corruption and safeguard justice," "We want justice." Second, people who take part in the petition are difficult to pacify as they are better-organized, more aggressive, and resilient. They are distrustful of the local government and can even resort to attacks on local CPC institutions. Under the instruction of unknown individuals, the groups refuse to give up unless their demands are met with. Third, the petitioners often issue stern demands and have high expectations. They either insist that high-ranking officials of the party or the local government show up and solve all problems at the shortest or ask them to give a clear-cut timing for the resolution. If a deputy leader is appointed to address the issue, the petitioners become angry because they think they are not being given due attention and refuse to cooperate in solving the problems. Fourth, in many cases, the petitioners seek to pursue their complaints with high-level/ranking authorities, because they believe in this way the petition will be addressed in the fastest and most effective way. Finally, petitioning can take place at any time of the year. In the past, most of the petitions took place during the slack agricultural season, but nowadays peasants seek to file their complaints whenever superior leaders come to inspect work, do field investigation, or attend important events.

There are three main stimuli to group petitions. The first is the indiscriminate collection of funds, fines, and fees that add to the peasants' financial burdens. The second is corrupt officials who abuse power for personal gains. The third is related to a small group of grassroots cadres whose brutish behavior and insensitive handling of complaints enrage the local people. Almost 80 % of the group petitions are sparked by these reasons.

(III) The scope of mass incidents expands from limited to wider one. The peasants' desire for potential extraprofit triggers the expansion of non-institutional political participation. Let us once again consider the example of the incidents in Qidong County in Hunan Province. It started with only a few peasants demanding the return of forced fund-raising fees from the local government, asking for a burden cut. The local government thought the request reasonable and gave in, but the decision gave many people the wrong impression that they could get what they wanted the more noise they made. Consequently, the neighboring villages and counties as well as some factories and enterprises also got involved, expanding the scope and scale of the incident.

(IV) The focus can change from financial issues to politics. In some places, peasants continued to create disturbance even after the local government agreed to meet their original requests. For example, the peasants in Sanjia County had asked the local government to return the funds collected for building new roads and schools, but after this initial demand was met, they went on to make obviously unreasonable request that the government also refund the

agricultural tax and tax on agricultural and forestry-related special products and planned to organize a huge march downtown to demand the government "downsize agencies" and "combat corruption." The core members led by Huang that initiated this disorder made use of religious beliefs to exert pressure on the people, designated underground contact persons for each village and examined all cars passing through. As for the leader of the group, Huang had bodyguards wherever he went and would not meet anyone unless they underwent a strict procedure. After they paralyzed the local village- and county-level governments, they claimed themselves as a real authority and turned their discontent toward the municipal government and even took to violent acts against the municipal authorities.

4.5 Case Studies of Peasants' Induced Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

Some scholars believe that Chinese traditional institutions have undergone three major changes brought about by peasant endeavors since the reform and opening up. The first is the emergence of household responsibility system, which challenged the people's commune system. The second is the rising of rural enterprises to counter the exclusion of peasants from industrialized market. The third is a massive cross-region migration of peasants, who try to find new employment, overthrowing the old socioeconomic management system of urban–rural division and regional isolation.[16] These breakthroughs are in the form of peasants' induced non-institutional participation. In fact, such participation initiated China's rural reforms.

4.5.1 Household Responsibility System Secretly Implemented by Xiaogang Villagers

In 1978, 18 peasants from the production team in Xiaogang Village, Fengyang County of Anhui Province, held a secret meeting where they agreed unanimously to contract communally owned land to individual households, and they sealed the agreement by imprinting their thumbs in red on the piece of paper. They did so without looking back and were fully aware of the risks involved. Poverty had brought them to this measure. Villagers were forced to live on the so-called resold grain and were dependent on state relief funds and loans to continue farming. Driven by hunger, they had to go out begging or migrate for work, abandoning

[16]He (1998, 253).

their land to weeds. Their lives were reduced to extreme poverty, with no money, no food, and no provisions. Their way of earning a living as street performers with local instruments later became Xiaogang Village's unique label. Although subject to the influence of ultra-leftist doctrine, the poverty-stricken peasants, like Yan Junchang and Yan Hongchang, leaders of the production team in Xiaogang Village, as well as other 18 men would not believe that they could not earn a living for themselves by their own hands. They met in secret and put their red thumbprints on this historic agreement, pledging to implement household responsibility system no matter what punishment may come.

Under the ultra-leftism doctrine of the time, such division of land went against the law and the CPC policies, and it was undoubtedly a capital offense. Things were about to turn bad when Wan Li, First Secretary of the Party Committee of Anhui Province, reported the practice to Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun. However, surprisingly, it met with great support from Deng, who stated, "Don't argue; try bold experiments and blaze new trails," and later expressed no worries about its undermining of collective economy. One year after implementing household responsibility system, peasants from the Xiaogang village production team yielded an unprecedented good harvest, with annual grain output soaring from 1978s 16,000 kg to an unprecedented 66,000 kg and their per capita income from 22 to 400 RMB. As of the year 1979, they were no longer beggars, but pioneers of a new system.

Later on, when Deng mentioned it as a renowned case of peasants' induced non-institutional participation, he incorporated the household responsibility system into the Chinese institutional system referring to it as an instance of "seeking truth from facts," Deng's renowned philosophy of pragmatism. This case has laid the foundation for a new era of CPC policies on rural reform.

4.5.2 The First Villagers Committee in China

In 1981, the very first villagers committee was elected in Sancha People's Commune in Yishan County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Later, with more and more villagers committees emerging in Yishan and Luoshan of Guangxi, the management system based on the operation of production brigades was finally dismantled by Chinese peasants. I once visited Bai Yihua, a well-known expert on rural democratic construction and asked him about "the first villagers committee in China."[17] Bai explained that the adoption of the household responsibility system had created a power vacuum in the village. As a result, many administrative affairs were unattended and the village was in disorder. Therefore, a senior CPC member in Sancha People's Commune voluntarily organized a villagers committee from production teams to help people self-manage. Under these circumstances, the

[17]Bai Yihua makes an introduction of the emergence of the first village committee in *Reform and Exploration of Grassroots Political Power in China*, vol. 1&2. See Bai (1995, 283–285).

villagers committee was an autonomous organization established by the Chinese peasants to enable self-governance and to manage village affairs as well as things that concern themselves. Bai also vividly equated the nascent period of social innovation with raw jade. A piece of precious jade may go unnoticed if no one understands its value. As an autonomous grassroots organization, the villagers committee is the perfect vehicle for grassroots democracy and can be considered as a piece of raw jade. However, no one would have imagine that it was Peng Zhen, the then Chairman of National People's Congress (NPC), who had noticed and strongly supported the development of the villagers committee ever since its very first establishment. Peng said that the villagers committee demonstrated the creativity of the peasants. He also urged the NPC and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) to study such practice and then spread it across the country. With the help and support from Peng Zhen and the central government, villagers committees emerged in Yishan and Luoshan of Guangxi Province. Later, following the steps of Guangxi, more villagers committees were established in selected areas in Beijing, Hebei, Jilin, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Fujian, Sichuan, and Gansu. Concurrently, a pilot program to minimize political intervention in the people's communes with the establishment of township governments was carried out concurrently in these areas. In 1982, villagers committees were enshrined in the 4th Constitution of the People's Republic of China. This marked the institutionalization of the peasant-initiated non-institutional participation.

4.5.3 Vote-Buying for the Family's Interests

The following case shows that there were various interests behind the peasant-initiated non-institutional participation.[18] This instance of participation aimed to satisfy family interests.

On August 9, 1996, an election for the new villagers committee was held in Tang'ao Village, Fenglin Town. Six villagers, including a primary school teacher, bribed 17 voters to vote for a certain candidate from their family, and paid five to twenty RMB for each vote. They were caught on the spot by Fenglin officials and were investigated afterward. Based on the concrete evidence, the township government made the following decisions: First, this election was declared invalid; second, following the orders from the county people's congress, the seven villagers involved were severely punished: three were sent to a school in town to learn the respective laws and regulations; two were placed on probation within the Party for one year; the primary school teacher was transferred away from the local primary school; and the party member who sold them the votes was placed on a two-year probation within the Party.

[18] *Tribune of Villages and Townships* 9 (1996).

4.5.4 Choosing the Head of Villagers Group by "Drawing Lots"

This phenomenon is commonly seen in villages with underdeveloped collective economy. As the village headman is marginalized and with little real benefits, no one wants to run for it. Therefore, it is determined by drawing lots rather than election.

Few people are willing to run for head of villagers group in villages in Pujiang County. 60 % of over 4000 villagers groups choose their group heads by drawing lots or rotation. When there is rotation, everyone wants to be placed further back in the list, so by comparison, drawing lots seems fairer. The latter is done in two ways: One way is by candidates drawing from numbered paper slips. The numbers represent the order in which the candidates will assume their posts as the head of the villagers, with tenures varying from several months to a year; the other way is by drawing lots. Whoever gets the lot will be the head and the process will repeat after one's term is up to choose the next one. As a result, it is possible for the same person to get chosen twice in two or three years and he could only blame it on bad luck.

All in all, there are four reasons behind this phenomenon. First, peasants were busy making money and had no time to care about commune affairs. Second, the power of the head of villagers groups had been reduced. Previously, the leader of a production team had the right to assign works, allocate tasks, evaluate workers' performances, and distribute food. The head of villagers group on the other hand did not have any of these powers. He had to carry out difficult and trivial tasks, such as overseeing the collection of agricultural tax and the purchase of grains, carrying out family planning, and asking people to attend meetings. Most of these tasks require hard work but are often not appreciated. Third, the pay is low. Apart from a few well-off ones, most villages in Pujiang County usually gave their group heads less than 100 RMB, or even 10 RMB in some villages, as a gesture. Fourth, the heads were usually the scapegoat. As they had little real power, they had to take all the blames or even verbal abuse from peasants when undertakings for improving public welfare and maintenance of water facilities did not go according to plan.

Most heads of villagers groups chosen by drawing lots were unwilling to serve the post and just want to go through the motion. This not only hindered the smooth implementation of CPC and state policies, but also negatively affected the economic development and social stability of villages.

4.5.5 976 Voters Reclaimed Their Right to Vote

The following case reflects the rich nature of peasants' interest articulation in the transformation period. When their legitimate political rights were threatened, they

would petition to protect them.[19] Sometimes, the personal interests of the petition organizer were also involved. Xia Xinfu was one such organizer.

November 21, 1995, was a day to remember for the 976 voters in Hedong Village, Danyang Town of Dangtu County in Anhui Province. It was on that day that the election fraud in the previous year was corrected. The voters won back their legitimate voting rights and finally elected a villagers committee that they trusted.

A year ago, on October 31, 1994, an election for the new villagers committee was held in Hedong Village. During the election, two mobile ballot boxes were used to collect votes from two groups of voters, one from natural villages of Xiahedong Village and Dongfu Village, and the other from natural villages of Zhonghedong Village and Shanghedong Village. Mobile ballot boxes were used for the convenience of the voters. However, staffs did not carry these boxes door to door for secret ballot; rather they secretly cast many ballots under someone's instruction.

One of the voters from Xiahedong Village, Zhang Qiangming, pointed out that among the 300 plus voters in his village, less than 20 % cast ballots on their own. He did not even get to see the mobile ballot box on the election day. Cheng Zaisi, the staff in the then Dongfu Village constituency, disclosed that someone alone casted 36 ballots.

Voter Xu Yuexing from Zhonghedong Village and Xu Xiufu from Shanghedong Village also revealed that 6 voters did not get their ballots. Despite serious violation of laws during the election, the village electoral commission counted the ballot papers and announced the election results under someone's instruction.

Xia Xinfu, a candidate running for the villagers committee, lost unfairly in the election. Unsatisfied with the election result, he and other 26 villagers jointly petitioned to the township people's congress. The congress declared the election invalid after investigation and the township party committee decided to hold a reelection on November 15. However, it was stranded due to the interference of the village party secretary and others. Following this was the election of the next township party committee and the township government. The newly elected township party committee later announced that the reelection of Hedong Villagers Committee members would be held in October 1995. The electoral committee of Hedong Village was formed on October 10. The villagers were then asked to learn the *Electoral Law of the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses of the People's Republic of China*, the *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China* and *Measures for the Implementation of the Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of Anhui Province*. The list of electors was posted on October 15. From October 15 to 20, 345 households on the whole nominated 37 representatives with one for every ten households. The candidates of the head of the villagers committee and other members were determined by secret ballots carried out during three electors'

[19] *Tribune of Villages and Townships* 1 (1996).

assemblies held on October 28, November 12, and November 16. The election day came on November 21 when the fourth electors' congress held by the villagers electoral committee passed the election procedures and finalized a list of vote supervisors and counters (exclusive of formal candidates and their direct relatives). Four mobile ballot boxes were distributed to four teams of electoral staff (each team had five staff, exclusive of formal candidates and their direct relatives). They would carry the boxes to four natural villages where secret ballots would be carried out one household after another.

At around 6 o'clock in the evening, the Hedong villagers gathered together to witness the moment they all had been waiting for. The vote counters opened the ballot boxes in front of over 30 elector deputies and many villagers and counted the votes under the supervision of vote supervisors. At about 9 o'clock, the voting result was announced to hundreds of villagers present. Xia Fuxin was elected as director of the villagers committee by 558 votes, majority of the votes received. Shi Caiyun, Fu Zheng, Zhu Yuchun, and Cheng Zaisi (all won by majority of the votes received) were elected as committee members. The shortlisted candidates were announced by Zhu Qifa, director of the villagers electoral committee, amid warm applause.

4.5.6 Instigating Collective Petition and Storming the Township Government Compound

On April 13, 1997, the *Heibei Daily* reported that in Shijiazhuang City of Hebei Province, a peasant surnamed Wang and a few other peasants were arrested for instigating illegal petitions. After reading this news, I went to the village where these peasants came from to find out more about this incident. It turned out that Mr. Wang, who was supposed to be the representative of the local community, actually wanted much more than just a settlement. He wanted the government to remove the land that had been contaminated and to compensate the villagers who had been growing their fruits, vegetables, and grains on the land, so that he could be remembered for his "outstanding achievement in treating pollution."

Based on the concrete evidences obtained through thorough investigation, the relevant authority of Shijiazhuang prosecuted Wang and others involved for serious violation of the petition procedure.

In early 1995, some villagers of Yanchangzhai Village, Zongshizhuang Town of Jinzhou City, engaged in a jump in collective visit to the higher authorities, bypassing the local bureau, in the hope that the government could address the pollution problem caused by the local industrial park. With the help of the environmental protection department of Shijiazhuang City and Hebei Province, the relevant authority of Jinzhou made great effort to address this issue. It suspended the production of respective factories and allocated 670,000 RMB to treat pollution. Most of the villagers were satisfied with these remedies. But a small number of

people led by Wang made speeches through loudspeakers to incite unwitting individuals and engaged in collective petition. They even surrounded and stormed the township government compound, made unreasonable requests, and threatened that they would keep petitioning to the municipal, provincial, and even central governments until their demands were met. Some activists even torn the notice of maintaining stability posted by Jinzhou Municipal Government in public. Wang also embezzled 87,000 RMB of the pollution treatment funds given by the government and used the money as "petition expense." Wang gathered the crowd to make disturbances, instigated and organized locals to storm the township government compound, and illegally detained the township government officials. His actions had constituted the crime of obstructing government administration, and therefore, he was arrested with the approval of the People's Procuratorate of Jinzhou City.

4.5.7 Forming Illegal Organizations

The incident was reported on the *Procuratorial Daily* on February 16, 1998. It demonstrated that the intention of political participation through forming illegal organization was self-evident and of great harm.

Chen Zhenyou, a peasant of Wuxuan County of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, started an illegal organization called "The Non-governmental Group of China" and called himself "the General Commander of the Earth, Moon, and Sun." Together with his conspirators Huang Zongquan and Huang Chongdan, he tricked the public into believing that they could escape fatal disasters as long as they received acupressure therapies naked and had sex with the three of them. In this way, they raped more than 10 women. Chen Zhenyou was finally convicted of rape and was sentenced to death and deprived of political rights for life by the Procuratorate of Laibin County of Guangxi. Huang Zongquan was sentenced to life imprisonment, and Huang Chongdan was sentenced to 13 years in prison.

4.5.8 The Mass Incident in Ningdu County

The mass incident in Ningdu County was the result of the local authorities' self-interested behaviors.[20]

The whole incident, triggered by rural taxation issue, took place in Ningdu County of Jiangxi Province in June 1996. In early June, the county government announced an unrealistic taxation plan to "collect half of the tax within a half period of time," demanding all townships and villages to "complete the task without asking for any help or causing any trouble." In order to collect all the taxes and

[20] *Journal of Party Members* 6 (1997).

administration fees within the stipulated time frame, Huangpi Town Government specially organized a tax collection team, led by Jiang, head of the local militia organization. On June 11, Jiang had a dispute over tax collection matter with villager Liao's wife when he and his team went to Liao's home to collect 468.2 RMB of tax collectable. Angered by the family's non-cooperative behavior in the Huangpi tax collection effort, Jiang reported the incident to Liu, Secretary of the Party Committee of Huangpi Town. With Liu's support, another special task force was formed to deal with non-cooperative families like Liao's, with town mayor Hu and Jiang as head and vice head. The task force team consisted of more than 30 township and village officials.

On June 14, the special task force, led by Jiang and others, went straight to Liao's house. This time, they claimed that the family owed various debts and fines totaling 10,862 RMB, but such claim was immediately denied by Liao. Infuriated, Jiang ordered the taskforce to search Liao's house and confiscate 28 household items including home appliances such as TV set, electric fan, and even a spatula. On top of that, the task force also seized more than 500 kg of unhusked rice. In the end, the family was left with only over 100 kg of rice and half of the bed. Liao's 72-year-old father, 69-year-old mother, and his two sons aged 8 and 11 knelt before Jiang and his team, pleading for more rice, but they were not moved. As a last resort, Liao's brother threatened to kill himself by drinking pesticide, but Jiang and his team ignored him and took everything away.

After their home was ransacked, Liao's wife Luohad visited the town government more than ten times, looking for higher level officials and demanding to redeem their confiscated properties, but to no avail. On July 9, Huangpi's market day, Luo posted a "letter to folks" on the wall of the town government building. In the letter, she described how her family's properties were confiscated and how difficult life was as a result. She then pleaded for food, financial assistance, and the public's support. The letter also revealed that Mr. Jiang had children born outside the one-child policy.

However, the letter was only put up for 10 min before taken down by town officials. So it did not create much of a stir and the issue still remained unsolved. Three days later, during another market fair, Luo appeared at the crossroads of the town center with her parents-in-law and children at around 10 a.m., holding the "letter to folks" on a paperboard and started begging. Many passersby who stopped to watch were outraged by their hardship. Before long, one official from the town government quickly came down after learning what was going on. He seized the paperboard and quarreled with Luo and her family. His behavior sparked huge backlash and questioning from the crowd. Unable to control the situation, he quickly ran back to the town government, followed by Luo and her family and other onlookers. Many people joined in and at one time, there were as many as 2,000 people gathering in the town government compound. Soon, the incident was reported to the Party Committee of Ningdu County, where a special working group was formed and sent to Huangpi at 1:30 p.m on the same day. The special working group managed to pacify the crowd after much persuasion and people finally started leaving at around 6 p.m.

The market fair in Huangpi runs once every three days. As some of the problems were yet resolved and peasants were still discontent with the heavy tax burden, more than 2000 of them gathered again in the town government compound on the following market day. As a result, the special working group announced three measures: to refund all the money collected during that year through unreasonable means, to conduct a comprehensive check on the financial accounts of all villages, and to replace the administration team with a forester team.

The ripple effect of the Huangpi incident, however, reached other eight surrounding townships. From July 15 to 20, frustrated by the heavy tax burden, peasants of three townships gathered in the township governments six times, with gatherings in some areas turned violent. Homes of four township officials were ransacked, with total property loss close to 60,000 RMB. On top of that, 13 officials and policemen were injured and the offices and staff canteens of nine village committees were smashed by peasants.

After the incident, the Party Committee of Jiangxi Province promptly sent a team to Ningdu County to conduct thorough investigation and also to evaluate the local governments' work on reducing peasants' tax burden and improving their conduct as directed by the central committee, the State Council as well as the provincial government and party committee. The investigation team was able to quickly calm the people down, quell the disturbance, promptly carry out remedial work, and maintain social stability. This mass incident in Ningdu County was a direct result of the heavy-handedness and crude work style of some grassroots officials, which seriously harmed people's interests and ultimately caused public outrage.

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Chapter 5
Change in Rural Control Mode and Peasants' Mandatory Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

The government's organizing ability and authority are the key factors to the success of social transformation as the effective implementation of social transformation policies is dependent on reliable channels of organization and strong governments. Furthermore, social transformation means reallocation of wealth, power, and identity as a part of the process of adjusting the old interest pattern. In this process, the government bodies that have authoritative power to allocate resources also have goals to maximize their own utility and their own interest requirements. Therefore, whether these government bodies could provide a just, fair, and reasonable order of interest distribution and an interest protection mechanism for all walks of life is the basic unit of measure of their governance capability and degree of authority.[1]

During the social transformation period, government bodies also need to adapt to changes which take place during transformation, such as adjusting the mode of social control and changing the ruling mode. The concept of change in the social control mode refers to the transition from the "big government-small society" mode in the planned economic system to a "small government-big society" mode in the market economic system. The rural control mode has also shifted from "integrating government administration and economic management" in the people's commune system to the "township government and village self-governance" model characterized by "separating economy from politics." The booming of peasants' non-institutional political participation during the transformation period is

[1]Concerning the difficulties of social transformation, Prof. Zheng Hangsheng believes that the conditions of social transformation, organizational capabilities, and the resistance against modernization in a country or region are decisive factors. It is self-evident that as internal or external conditions of a country or region get better, there are stronger organizational capabilities and less resistance from tradition, and as a result, fewer difficulties with social transformation will be encountered. See Zheng Hangsheng, ed., *Empirical Research on Rural Social Transformation in Contemporary China* (China Renmin University Press, 1998), 25–30.

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also attributed to the change in the rural control mode and the inherent changes brought about by the intervention of new laws, decrees, and policies. Due to the poor implementation of such intervention, actual performance fell short of expectations. Even more, the lack of an interest distribution order and an interest protection mechanism also leads to peasants' ill-formed political participation, which is thus called mandatory non-institutional participation.

5.1 China's Rural Control Mode During the Transformation Period

In short, political participation is a way for citizens and the government to control each other. It is through political participation that citizens realize their control over the government, which is an important way for citizens, but with limited efficacy. The efficiency of political participation is more affected by the political system. The channels and modes for Chinese peasants' political participation during the transformation period are, to a great extent, closely related to the change in the rural control mode.

5.1.1 Change in Rural Management Structure

Management means control and adjustment. "Politics is the practice of organized control over a human community." One of the classic definitions of politics suggests its most basic function. The village is China's earliest rural management unit and the most basic unit of social organization. Rural management is, in essence, gathering rural community groups together to control their behaviors, coordinate relationships, and mobilize social resources. It is formed to realize common production and way of life for rural community members, and its major role is to coordinate various elements in the community so as to bring community actions in accord.

A social unit of people living together in a certain area is called a community. A community structure is formed from the various social relations that people build in community activities and are epitomized by people's position and status in the social relations within the community. It prescribes modes of people's social activities and serves as the basis for all social activities in which people engage. A complete community structure is generally comprised of geographical locations, population, management, and economy. Of these, the economic structure typically drives the production, development, and change of other structures, while the other structures develop in tandem. The change in community structure was finally embodied in people's common activities in the community.

For over more than 2000 years from the union of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC) to the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), China's rural management structure has taken in various forms, from the county pavilion system in the Qin

and Han dynasties (221 BC–220 AD), the *li* system in the Southern Dynasty (420–589), and the three chiefs system in the Northern Dynasty (386–581) to the township administrative system in the Sui (581–618 AD), Tang (618–907 AD), and Early Song dynasties (960–1279), from the *lishe* system, *cunjia* system, and *baojia* system in the Song Dynasty till the end of Qing Dynasty to the township official system in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom period (1851–1864)—all systems have the following commonality discussed below. That is the rural management mode which takes the village community of blood relationships as its basic unit. Here, the economic gentry stand between government officials and citizens and integrate executive authority, autonomy, and family clan. It is a relatively autonomous mechanism, which does not completely rely on the administrative orders from the imperial court to govern the village community. Such a structure is called the "patriarchal clan management structure."[2] Based on a self-sufficient peasant economy, the patriarchal clan management structure is intrinsically closed and decentralized due to disconnection between peasants and material interest. There is an extremely low degree of institutionalization of the society, and family clans are the main organizations in rural communities. Therefore, clans play a leading role in the management of rural communities. Only by adopting such a management mode could outside political control achieve its goal.

The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the monarchy and established a capitalist regime, but the regime did not establish power politics that the transition from traditional to modern society needs. The change of political structure of the state, the intervention of warlord regimes, and dictatorial rule aimed at gaining more tax revenue had a great impact on the rural community management structure. Examples of this phenomenon are the district village system and city village system during the period of Northern Warlords (1912–1928) and the "new county system" in the period of Nanjing National Government (1927–1949), but its basic content still did not constitute any major change.

The new policies of the Community Party of China concerning villages realized complete external control over traditional villages and broke through the patriarchal clan management mode, greatly improving the degree of institutionalization of rural communities. Consequently, family clans withdrew from the leading role in rural management and were replaced by party organizations, mass organizations, and new community organizations in the modern sense. New community organizations, represented by peasants' associations, went beyond the traditional family system. They broke through the blood relationship standard of rural community membership and re-established new standards based on social status. After the founding of the PRC, with the wide promotion of agricultural co-operative movement, a new type of authority beyond clan power emerged, and rural management structure started to take the form of the township regime and mutual aid production teams, as well as a considerable number of farmers' associations. Farmers' associations were the villagers' autonomous organizations as well as the

[2]Li et al. (1994), 86–87.

legal executive organs in the land reform. The greatest impact on patriarchal clan governance was the people's commune system integrating government administration and economic management with a three-tier management structure including the production team, the production brigade, and the people's commune, or a two-tier management structure including the production team and the people's commune. This type of rural governance significantly strengthened the direct influence of the state (and the CPC) on rural communities, steering people's allegiance from blood relation clans to a new developed legal corporate body, i.e., the collective society, thus convincingly achieving rural social cohesion. Some scholars, after analysis, believe that such an authoritative rural management structure is frequently found during the transition from the traditional society to a modern society. During that period, family clans on the one hand gradually lost their dominance in grassroots rural society due to the commodity production's major impact on the development of traditional blood relations. On the other hand, grassroots rural communities had not yet formed new mechanisms to check powers since the self-sufficient peasant economy had not undergone complete transformation. However, in order to establish a modern country, the restraints of the traditional clan authority and modes of property ownership needed to be broken to establish a new mode of rural social relationships and ways for political organizations to wield power. In order to establish a new rural social order, the rural regime (the political party) organization needed to not only organize farmers politically, but increase the degree of systemization of rural society and regulate behaviors of farmers as well. Authoritative rural management structures enable the state to penetrate into all aspects of rural society. This type of management structure ensures control over the rural society, forming a tight and homogeneous rural society.

The authoritative rural management structure, especially the collective commune system, established a strong rural political authority, which ended the conventional rural management structure featuring "the unity of Chinese people merely existing within the enclosure of clans, and never extending to the reach of a state."[3] However, when the political reinforcement took extreme forms, rural society stood at the brink of a military or semi-military presence at the expense of social self-governance. Excessive and intensified interventions imposed by rural political powers destroyed social vitality, ignored reality, and facts, hindered market development, and restricted geographic mobility. However, "certain communities still struggle to make a living and raise the next generation within their original geographic area, with groups binding by consanguinity not revealed formally."[4] Such "authoritative rural management structure" could also be referred to as a comprehensive or "integrated" governance mode.

After the third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, China's rural areas implemented the reform based on contract management by households, thus undermining the economic basis of people's commune system. With

[3] *Selected Works of Sun Yat-sen* (People's Publishing House, 1981), 617.

[4] Wang (1991), 56.

the collapse of such a collective system, the rural management structure then evolved into a "township government and village self-governance" model, and a new form of rural social relationship was being developed honoring the spirits of "direct democracy" and "rule of law." Transformed from collective control, community governance fostered an interest-driven, contractual model, emphasizing the involvement of community members into rural society along with this new round of reforms. Regarded as "a democratic structure governed by the rule of law," the new model was established on the basis of commercialized production, specialized operation, and socialization in rural areas. Community members became increasingly connected to each other in their economic and social interests as shaped by modern modes of production, thus generating the intrinsic demand in peasants to participate in the governing issues of their community. After a series of divisions and integrations of administrative units, the village-level grassroots authority became the representative administrator of national government powers in rural areas and also a political entity through which rural residents were able to participate in political life and express their opinions so as to protect their own interests (see footnote 2). However, such a structure merely appeared as a primary mode of governing during the transformation period. Due to the restrictions imposed by the existing economic structure, the continuous improvement of such governing mode still relied heavily on a series of institutional innovations so as to bring complicated intrinsic rural attributes into institutional frameworks.

From the previous analysis of the evolution of the rural management structure, it can be concluded that state control over rural society was affected by multiple factors such as the economic, educational, cultural, geographic, and demographic attributes of the rural communities, yet the most influential element could be attributed to the rural management structure.

5.1.2 Types of Rural Social Control

Some scholars have proposed two types of abstract rural control models: the control model in an "integrated society," and the control model in a "diversified society." An integrated society refers to a society with a high integration of economic, political, and social life featuring shutoff livelihood, interactions within solitary social organization, authority mind-set that obeys authority, and centralized distribution of interests. An integrated society suppresses the role of the market and honors conventional blood relationships. Individual demand and desire for a better livelihood are usually highly inhibited, and information and news are spread by word of mouth between acquaintances on a small scale. Under these conditions, individual privacy and freedom of movement are severely restricted, which explains why "any disguise would be easily seen through by the general public." An integrated society is like a complex net, pinning down each individual member on a fixed point mitigating the chance of unrest or riot. Political and administrative power governs the self-sufficient integrated society in an all-round way at any

moment, maintaining its stability and social order. A diversified society, in contrast, is a society featuring a separated economic, political, and social life, with free movement of sufficient resources and enormous freedom for individual activities. A diversified society embraces an open economy, contractual interactions, and freedom of thought. With the market playing but an elementary role, universal thinking spreads rapidly, rules and regulations are clarified, and the monopoly on the news and information is impossible to realize. In such a society, individuals are provided with numerous options in a diversified society. In fact, each individual is able to find himself a legitimate standing in his livelihood. Social control is thus realized by legal means and media supervision. Law enforcement authorities such as prison and police system are mainly used as a deterrence. Social order in a diversified society encompasses mobility, well-being, and freedom. Thus, the cost of social control is considerably lower in every dimension. It is apparent that integrated social control relies on state power and mandated obedience, while diversified social control puts emphasis on the efforts of the general public and self-discipline.[5]

Joel Migdal offers an alternative perspective for understanding rural social control and takes a new look at the relationship between the state, landlords, and peasants. One is the tightly controlled model, where landlords are able to maintain a tight grip on critical resources, confining peasants to an inward-looking condition. The existence of such communities relies heavily upon the dispersion of political power. Moreover, the severity of restrictions upon peasants with regard to their interaction with the larger societies is determined by the importance, scope, and monopolistic status of such resources as dominated by landlords. A significant negative correlation can be seen between the landlords' power and the efficiency and effectiveness of social and political organizations within a tightly controlled rural society, where peasants experience few opportunities for the necessary exchange and interaction to form a protective brokerage model, as the landlords are the only channel through which individual peasants are able to connect with the society at large, a one way relationship. Besides, the power of the state displays a weak foundation in rural society, especially in a manor-based model.[6] Another model is loosely controlled where landlords are absent, or display a weak presence, and thus, peasants have to adjust their activities to ensure compliance with authorities outside of the bounds of the villages. Under these circumstances, the peasant community itself turns out to be an obstacle to their connection with society at large, which mainly results from the relationship between such communities and the government. Other causes terms from the sense of insecurity peasants developed after participating in market activities. Such loosely controlled communities are often seen in a highly centralized political system, such as bureaucratic society, or church-controlled districts; yet, sometimes they can also be found in remote areas beyond the dominance of landlords in a political system

[5]Chen Mingming, Xie Zhikui, et al. A Discussion on the Development of China's Grassroots Politics," *Exploration and Free Views* 3 (1998).

[6]Migdal (1996), 27–37.

where power is dispersed. The liaisons between such isolated villages and the larger societies are delegates from the government, namely tax collectors. There are two types of formal relations between the central government and the rural areas: One is the government exploiting peasants through taxation. The other is the government upholding law and order to ensure regular agricultural production. Peasants almost equate the government with an exploiter. Under the status quo, rural communities keep looking inward, with no representatives of their interests in the outside world who can sway government policies in their favor (such as calling for tax reduction). With such loose control, therefore, peasants still look inward. There are two main causes. First, peasants have no power over the outside world to advocate their own interests, while the government-controlling class and their agents keep exploiting peasants. As a result, peasants isolate themselves even more and no longer wish to engage in the outside world. They wean themselves off the outside as much as possible by producing their daily necessities at home or trying to find them in local areas. Second, insecure about participating in the market, peasants choose to grow subsistence crops instead of cash crops, so that they no longer need to rely that much on people and things they have no control over. The feeling of insecurity is rooted in the conflicts and inconsistency between different elements of the market. It is also due to the monopolistic power enjoyed those from other classes. Without economic interdependence, there will be no solid foundation for political alliance among peasants. In addition, the inadequate market system means that there is no means of exchange through which peasants can cultivate relations of economic interdependence with other classes. This in turn entrenches peasants' powerlessness. There are two types of loosely controlled communities—group-based and local network-based. In group-based communities, peasants confine their activities within their own villages. Almost all communication with the government officials or others outside is conducted by their official representative (the village chief). The village pays taxes as a group, and it avoids contact with other villages as much as possible. Local network-based community also restricts the communication of peasants with the outside world. But this is mostly done through social networks. Direct contact with other villages is an essential part of life for peasants, because they have to rely on people and resources in neighboring communities for basic needs. This type of village can act as a buffer in the clash between peasants and the government. But of course, this type of village is not involved in the more diversified social system in which peasants have to encounter a large number of strangers quite different from them.[7]

In analyzing North China villages from 1900 to 1942, Prasenjit Duara proposed new concepts including "the cultural nexus of power" from the perspective of "popular culture" and demonstrated in detail how state power penetrated the bottom of society through various channels (such as business groups, brokers, temples, religions, mythology and symbolic materials, etc.). Duara discussed and analyzed the "broker model" in rural governance. In English, a "broker" is an

[7]Migdal (1996), 38–49.

indispensable agent in the transaction, with neither positive nor negative connotation. Duara puts the "brokers" (or "intermediaries") who governed the rural areas on behalf of government authorities into two categories. The first category includes "protective brokers" who protect the interests of the community from the state power. Brokers of this category are often in close relations with the community, which is somewhat similar to a "rural community." In the second category, there are "entrepreneurial brokers" who view villagers as targets for exploitation. However, the word "entrepreneurial" (which usually means "enterprising") often has positive and justifiable meanings, thus unable to convey the brokers' greedy and predatory nature. Therefore, brokers of this category can also be called "predatory brokers."[8]

Strictly controlled communities resemble protective brokers where peasants deal with state power mainly through landlords (guardians). Loosely controlled communities are similar to entrepreneurial brokerage in that rural community members directly confront state power and consider themselves exploited. Therefore, it is fair to say that in strictly controlled rural areas, the state rules and collects tax mainly through the protective brokerage system ran by landlords (gentries, guardians), whereas in loosely controlled rural areas, the state rules and collects tax mainly through entrepreneurial brokerage system controlled by government representatives (tax collectors), assuming that both types of villages are inward looking.

Strong outside forces can help transform inward-looking rural areas into outward-looking ones with new rural control model where the state power exercises more direct control over peasants, who may feel this change in their daily life. Let us name these villages with direct involvement of the state "directly controlled" villages. In these villages, through propaganda such as "×× on behalf of the state" and "×× on behalf of the Party," peasants are closely involved with the regime. Under direct control, the once inward-looking villages start to place its members in designated social networks as mandated by the state, significantly enhancing the power of the state to levy tax and its influence on community structures. On the other hand, however, this control tends to reduce the state's maximum utility, resulting in higher costs for maintaining its authority and the balance of interest distribution.

When the state gradually steps out of areas where it should not or cannot exercise its power, and only resorts to participate in political adjustment when necessary, market can distribute resources, peasant household scan produces independently, and peasant community can manage the society. This marks the transformation from directly controlled villages to jointly controlled villages by the state, community, and peasant households. In such jointly controlled villages, in addition to direct political adjustments, the ruling of the state depends more on the unique role peasant community that plays as the intermediary between the state and peasant households (or individuals). Whether formal communities can

[8]Duara (1994), 2–3 and 37–49.

play their role depends on the continuous strong and reasonable support from the state as well as on their own cohesion. The lack of cohesion or support from the state may breed many voluntarily formed informal organizations, weakening the state due control over the peasant society, thus unable to maximize the state's utility. Jointly controlled villages enable the state to govern peasant society while allowing peasants to voluntarily participate in the development of their communities. This arrangement encourages community organizations and members to participate.

Whether it is protective brokers exercising strict control or entrepreneurial brokers exercising loose control, whether the village is directly or jointly controlled, they are all an important part of and restricted by the community management structure. In short, in China, the first two types of brokers are limited by patriarchal clan management structure. Directly controlled villages correspond to the authoritative rural management structure, while jointly controlled villages are influenced by democracy and rules of law.

5.1.3 Modes of Rural Social Control During the Transformation Period

During the transformation period, rural areas in China gradually shifted from governed by the people's commune, which integrated government administration with economic management, to the "township government and village self-governance" model, symbolizing a separation of politics and economics. This marks the transition in how rural areas are governed, from "direct control" to "joint control."

The people's commune system was a typical management structure of direct control, with ruling responsibilities covering all aspects. The powerful control of the state extends to every single aspect of rural society's people's life, including politics, economy, culture, and many other areas, by controlling the means of living of rural residents (also known as the "integration of government administration with economic management"). In this system, communities were governed in the same way as a country, while the state power was extended all the way to the community level. A prominent feature of this system is a high degree of centralized administration.

The rural household contract responsibility system deprived the people's commune system and its economic foundation and triggered a series of internal and external institutional reforms. Eventually, the people's commune system was phased out, followed by the replacement of primary organizations, such as people's communes, production brigades, and production teams, with town and village people's governments, villagers committees, and village groups. Accordingly, the management structure was transformed to the "township government and village self-governance" model. This signified the state's withdrawal from direct control of rural economy and society, which can be interpreted as changes in rural

productive relations and changes in control mode between the state and the rural society, respectively. The state no longer controlled rural areas directly. Instead, it promoted a joint control, with the participation of the state, township and village community, and rural households, mainly based on both contract and interest under the guidance of the government.

However, during the transformation from "direct control" to "joint control," the dismantlement of the people's commune system, coupled with the establishment of a market economy, did not result in concrete changes of the public power structure and mechanism. Some areas were still left under "direct administration." On the other hand, following the dismantlement of the people's commune, the functions performed by former social organizations were not undertaken by new organizations, thus allowing traditional organizations (including patriarchal clan organizations), emerging organizations (including religious organizations), and elites from the former organizations to step in. This gave birth to protective brokers exercising tight control and entrepreneurial brokers exercising loose control. Therefore, during the transformation period, in addition to joint control, direct control, protective brokerage exercising strict control, and entrepreneurial brokerage excising loose control were also found in rural areas. At this stage, there were diverse control modes in rural areas.

The dissolution of the people's commune system led to a partial return to traditional villages, but not a thorough one. The external control, though weakened, remained powerful. The new system incorporated many elements of the people's commune system, especially its core—the collective land ownership. Thus, the new system, featuring contracted responsibility on household basis, was different from the people's commune, with the collectively owned land managed by production teams. It was also unlike the traditional system which, featuring private ownership of land, allowed free trade of land. The new system forbade land sales. Collective land ownership served as a foundation for the economic and social development in rural areas during the transformation period. The strong public power, another important legacy of the people's commune system, was the driving force for further social and economic development and helped enhance the democratic political system, creating a favorable environment for social stability and harmonious development.

According to some scholars, after the collapse of the people's commune system, rural politics evolved into three types. The first was development-oriented villages, mostly located in the more developed coastal areas. This was a new form of rural politics where peasants gathered and formed organizations through local companies. The society functioned well in terms of politics, economy, and culture, demonstrating features of urbanization. The second type was maintenance-oriented, meaning the social and economic structures of the commune system were unchanged, but with more forceful rural organizations, sound social environment, and social stability. The last kind of villages was almost paralyzed, where rural committees were basically non-existent. Patriarchal authorities or gangsters began to emerge, undermining social stability. Overall, only a few villages were development-oriented. Due to sluggish economic growth in rural areas, most places did

not yet establish new (development-oriented) social integration model after the disintegration of the people's commune. To some extent, this led to the anomie in some rural areas. Therefore, China faces an urgent political and social task of how to re-establish the political system in rural areas while maintaining stability in the changing society.

The diversification of governance models reflects the changes in internal forces that control China's rural society. Some scholars think that after the reform and opening up, the previous basic-level organizations were disintegrated and the "de-organization" process began. But in different places with different historical and cultural backgrounds, "de-organization" produced various outcomes. In Anhui Province, Guangxi Province, and central provinces with low industrialization and collectivization levels, patriarchal clans flourished. In southeast coastal provinces that were highly industrialized and less collectivized, an industry-dominated market came into being. Social organizations and patriarchal clans developed, but not as influential as those in central areas. The southern regions of Jiangsu Province and the Beijing–Tianjin region were highly industrialized and collectivized, leading to industrialized organizations which integrated economic and administrative functions.[9] The three types of "de-organization" process discussed above resulted in the changes of controlling forces in the society.

The joint and diversified social governance model in China's rural areas during the transformation period showed that villages were jointly controlled by diverse forces, characterized by the changes in the powers of the Party, governments, communities, patriarchal clans, religious groups, economic bodies, cultural institutes, civil organizations, and local forces.

5.1.4 Changes in Rural Control Mode and Peasants' Political Participation During the Transformation Period

Rural control mode shows the political regulatory relationship between the state, communities, and peasants. The scale and results of peasants' political participation are restricted by the rural control mode. How much peasants participate in politics depends on how greatly their interests and social statuses are affected by politics. It is also determined by how much and in which way politics affects people's life in rural communities. Therefore, it is safe to say that the ways and channels of peasant's political participation are decided by the rural control mode. But peasants may participate in politics in a distorted way when they are presented without adequate institutional support for political participation under certain control mode.

[9]He (1998), 283. For more details, see pp. 282–319.

Under the "direct control" mode of the people's commune system, the state's control over rural society was unilateral. Strongly affected by external control forces, the political life of peasants is large scaled, organized, and passive. As all the social activities in this system are politicalized, even the slightest social change would significantly influence politics (or governments' decisions).

China's diversified and hierarchical rural control mode during the transformation period also influences the breadth and depth of peasants' political participation. In terms of China's institutional arrangement, the peasants' political participation is defined by their classes. On the one hand, elite groups who have amassed a large amount of social resources have cultivated close relations with township government and rural public authorities. They are efficient and rational in their political life. The elite group refers to the peasants who have influenced over rural public affairs with their advantageous social resources, including the village party branch secretary, the director of the village committee, team leader, the head of party group, heads of village-run enterprises and other collective economic organizations, members of functional organizations subordinate to village committee, retired village officials, teachers of village-run primary schools, CPC members, and other able peasants. They find in front of them a smooth road to political participation. On the other hand, there are ordinary peasants without advantageous social resources, who do not have a say in county government and rural public authorities. They are less active in political participation and have fewer opportunities to participate. Without sufficient political participation, they are the class with no political life. In jointly controlled villages, "China's institutional arrangements have offered peasants more and better regulated access to political matters than in people's commune period, whether in official political arrangements such as voting, or in activities that local people are used to, such as interacting with politicians. Even when peasants send written complaints, sue the government, or in the rare case where individual peasants resist the government, the rural public authorities have shown much greater tolerance and adaptability."[10]

During the transformation period, when the rural control mode changed from "direct control" to "joint control," ordinary peasants participated less in political matters than in people's commune period, when a large number of peasants were mobilized. Scholars studied this phenomenon and found four underlying reasons: (i) With the adjustment of national ideology and disintegration of the people's commune as an comprehensive governing body, the new governance mode no longer needs strong political mobilization to govern the peasants. Therefore, the old-fashioned approaches applied by people's commune, such as political learning, class warfare, and frequent mass gatherings, are gradually phased out or abolished completely. This puts an end to the decades of mobilized political participation that was left unchanged from revolutions to reconstruction until entering the transformation period; (ii) since the implementation of household responsibility system, economic activities, which used to be organized in groups,

[10]Wu Yi, "Political Participants in Village Governance—An Analysis on Villagers' Public Participation and Public Awareness," *Strategy and Management* 1 (1998).

have become more individualized, leading to less interaction between peasants and the authorities. In terms of political and cultural matters, peasants during the people's commune period were much more familiar with rural affairs, thanks to the frequent mass learning activities and radio broadcasts. But nowadays, the increasingly popular TV has replaced rural radio programs as the essential tool of mass media. While it helps broaden the peasants' horizon, it also distracts them from learning about rural affairs. Therefore, some middle-aged and older peasants express their wishes to hold mass meetings again, which reflects not only their nostalgia for the cultural aspects of collectivism, but also their longing for more involvement in political matters and interaction with the community; (iii) peasants have become more rational during political participation. Unlike the members of the people's commune who blindly followed and admired public authorities, they base their attitudes and decisions on their personal interests. To be specific, they are much more aware of their right and have become more responsible in the election of village committees. Meanwhile, they are paying more attention to politics closely related to their interests, such as the change of the national agricultural policy, and the state of social morality. In addition, they do not follow upon political matters as closely as they did during the people's commune period and do not easily participate in any political movement that is irrelevant to them, especially ideological movement. Their indifference to politics is in line with their characteristics as the class with no political life; (iv) after the reform and opening-up policy was adopted in 1978, people in the rural areas had more choices and opportunities to make a fortune. They did not have to pursue their interests through participation in public life. In addition, as the public authorities lost its sacredness, villagers were not pressured into participating in public life. As a result, most young men went to work outside to enrich their own families, not bothering to know what was going on in the village. By contrast, it was the women farming at home that were more interested in local affairs and may even feel disappointed when they were not adequately involved.

During the transformation period, in jointly controlled rural communities, public power was mainly wielded by a modern corporate organization—the village committee. In terms of institutional regulation, the "principal-agent approach" to governance was an important tool both for governance and for the participation of villagers in political affairs in the "township government and village self-governance" pattern. On the one hand, villagers exercised their right of self-governance and entrusted the villagers committee with this responsibility by voting for it unanimously. On the other hand, they authorized organizations such as the villagers' representative assembly to make decisions, manage, and supervise public affairs through one-off voting. However, the "principal-agent approach" was often limited by the diverse social control models, in which the "involvement of organizations" had a profound impact on the political life of peasants.

During the transformation period, a diversity of hierarchical rural control modes was adopted in different power wielding mechanisms. How peasants participated in the political affairs mainly depended on how power was wielded locally.

5.2 The Exercise of Power in China's Rural Areas During the Transformation Period

Power structure is of central importance to rural community management, and how the power is wielded is at the core of rural control. During the transformation period, the grassroots politics in China's rural communities mainly consisted of two levels: the township level and the village level. At the township level, power was wielded by the town governments, the grassroots political power in rural China. It was the most basic level of state governing. At the village level, villagers achieved village self-governance through managing, educating, serving, and exercising their rights of democracy by themselves. This was a direct way for local people to express their interests, participate in state and community affairs, and have a say in policy implementation. This "township government and village self-governance" model aimed to combine the macromanagement of the state with the voluntary participation of villagers. During the transformation period, with the adjustment of power structure, the "direct control" mode that aimed to create a big government collapsed, and the functions of government were decentralized. Since the county and village governments could not undertake all these functions immediately, civil organizations (or the civil society) stepped in, thus performing some governance roles. Constrained by the diversified hierarchical control modes, the power landscape of rural China during the transformation period shifted its focus from politics to a combination of politics, economy, and society. In the meantime, the internal control models in rural society also diversified. On the one hand, the macromanagement of the state was still effective. With increasing influence of the market, especially when peasants were more organized due to agriculture industrialization, the rural communities became more capable of governing themselves. Thus, a hierarchical power structure was gradually taking shape. On the other hand, as the micromanagement institutions in the rural area remained weak, some rural communities went in the direction of disorganization, resulting in various power struggles in loosely controlled rural communities. During the transformation period, influenced by "the involvement of organizations," the political life of peasants was limited by how the power was exercised in rural areas.

5.2.1 The Exercise of Power in the Township Government

The township government is the grassroots administrative authority in China. It is the organ which exercises state power in rural areas and safeguards the social stability, economic development, and construction of political democracy in rural communities. Therefore, the township government balances the exercise of state and local power. It is not only a basic political unit, but also functions as a geographically bonded regional organization. The features of township government

are fundamental, successive, regional, and autonomous.[11] The township is managed by the township party committee, the township people's congress, and the township people's government. Based on case studies, some scholars have analyzed how the underlying structure of power and the mechanism by which it is exercised in rural areas and concluded it is like a highly concentrated pyramid, where the township party committee is at the top level and the township party secretary serves as the head. The functions of CPC and the governments are highly integrated, and the political, economic, administrative, and social powers remain highly concentrated in the township government.[12] The township party secretary is at the top level, followed directly by the deputy township party secretary, who is also the head of the township people's government. The third level consists of the members of the township party committee and the deputy heads of the administrative organs. The directors of other administrative branches (centers, offices, and stations) make up the fourth level, while the directors of organizations such as the presidium of the township people's congress, the women's federation, and the Youth League Committee are on the margins of the power structure.

The "township government," characterized by high power concentration and the absence of an adequate system of checks and balances, shows a tendency toward self-expansion. The government also plays dual roles by acting as both a player and a regulator in market competition; it functions both as an administrative organ responsible for government at a higher level and a management organ which organizes and coordinates the organization of the local economy.[13] However, the township government is often "dismembered." It becomes weakened as many county government agencies have set up their own offices down to the township level. Some individual offices gradually become controlled by their functional administrative superiors. Therefore, township government becomes compartmentalized, with multiple policies launched by different departments inconsistently and without coordination, causing inefficiencies in the townships' policy-implementing process. Additionally, power is delegated in a unidirectional and top-down hierarchical, leaving the township government less power. For example, a Mr. Shan, the director of Xuguang Chemical Plant in Jianli Town of Linyi County, Shandong Province, was officially appointed the deputy head of the township, since his company "had invested over 5 million RMB in the town and had paid over 100,000 RMB in taxes annually." This appointment was endorsed by a document issued by the county party committee which aimed at attracting investment, establishing economic ties, and facilitating the economic growth in the private sector. It stipulates that a non-local investor can be appointed to deputy head of the county and be responsible for science and technology, if he/she has invested over 10 million RMB in the local economy and has paid over 1 million RMB in taxes

[11] *A Study on the Systems of Rural Grassroots Social Organizations in China*, 82–87.

[12] Wang Yalin, "Rural Grassroots Political Power Structure and its Operating Mechanism—A Case Study of Changwu Township in Heilongjiang Province," *Social Sciences in China* 5 (1998).

[13] Da Sulin and Li Zhiyu, "The Dual Role of Township Governments and Institutional Innovation during the Transformation Period," *Jiangsu Social Sciences* 6 (1997).

annually, and to positions like deputy head of the township on science and technology with over 1 million RMB in investments and over 100,000 RMB in taxes annually. As for private business owners, they can be appointed to deputy head of the township on science and technology if they pay more than 100,000 RMB of tax annually. However, if tax payment is below standard for two consecutive years, they will be removed from their position. However, China's Constitution stipulates that deputy heads of townships must be elected by the local people's congresses. A vice-chairman of a township people's congress explained that the decision of filling the positions without elections was made by the county people's congress. There is nothing they could do at the township level but obey the order.[14]

One township party secretary confided about his hardships under this contradictory operation of township government: Township officials will take the most responsibility for any matter. We are subject to deposition whenever failing any one of the targets for tax collection, social security, family planning, education, and newspaper publication, since if one target fails, all fail. All the industrial, commercial, and agricultural tax collections of the town are imposed on the township officials, who subsequently impose these tasks on village officials. But in accordance with the law, village officials do not have the authority to collect taxes, cash, or fees and are susceptible to any resulting punishments. These factors pose challenges to the decision-making of the township party committee, which were confused about whether they shall fulfill the imposed task. In the end, they inevitably violate laws from time to time to accomplish the task and meanwhile govern the town by law. Consequently, organs in the township abused their coercive powers, for example, to forcibly collect agricultural fees or to enforce punishments on violations of family planning; some social organizations and even illegal ones were also included in the sphere of township government operation, such as the use of criminals in village administration. Some township governments are struggling to get ahead, and the leadership of some township governments is loosely organized, obstructing the smooth implementation of government decisions, which compromises the governments' authority and raises tensions between government officials and villagers.

5.2.2 The Exercise of Power in the Village Self-Governance

Village self-governance is a major institutional reform for towns undergoing the transformation period and is a reflection of peasants' political autonomy in production and operation and a significant part of the political system of villages in China. Village self-governance, by its very nature, means village members self-organize and collectively manage affairs within their village. It is a basic system in the political lives of villagers. In accordance with state laws and regulations, villagers formulate their own rules and regulations take on roles for

[14] *China Women's News* 17 Nov. 1998.

self-management, self-education, and self-service, and coordinate life and production activities based on democratic consult. The grassroots autonomic system of village self-governance mainly consists of "the four democracies of and by villagers," i.e., democratic election, democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision. Of the four democracies, democratic election is the prerequisite; democratic decision-making is the key; democratic management is the essence; and democratic supervision is a form of guarantee. The four democracies are enforced by the villagers committee in a self-governing manner, which is reflected in the following aspects: Members of this committee are elected directly by villagers; meetings of villagers or their representatives are responsible for discussing and making decisions on important matters of the village; village affairs are democratically managed; and conduct of village officials and villagers and the village public account of revenue and expenditure are supervised in a democratic way. Village self-governance must be carried out under the leadership of the CPC and must not violate rules and regulations prescribed by state laws. The extent to which village self-governing can be implemented relies on two factors: first, the relations of the villagers committee with the village party committee, the government, and the party branch at a higher level; second, the awareness and capabilities of villagers in handling village affairs.

From this perspective, self-governance of the village was not solely entrusted to the villagers committee. During the transformation period, the village party branch was a center for exercising village self-governance. In addition, the villagers committee also served as alternate center to exercise self-governance. By now, village organs' powers are legitimized by superior powers. However, family revival, shadow powers, outlaw forces, and even illegal organizations are infiltrating into the official political structures; village self-governance is eroded in this way. Meanwhile, village self-governance is frequently operationally compromised and is often a puppet of shadow powers.

In the formal political system of village grassroots, villagers committees during the transformation period have more independent yet still limiting self-governing rights when compared to the production brigades in the people's commune system. First, under the organization system at the village level, villagers committees have less power than village party branches. The village party branch makes fundamental policies on village affairs, and the villagers committees simply implement the policies. Therefore, the self-governing rights of villages are mainly in the hands of village party branches. Second, villagers committees are under the leadership of governments at the town and township level, which make specific regulations on rural issues, including land distribution, family planning, housing zones, and funeral rituals. The villagers committees are responsible for carrying out the regulations made by governments at higher levels but do not have the right to change them. Third, governments at higher levels are used to lead the villagers committees administratively. They assign economic and social instructions and targets to the villagers committees to implement and realize. The villagers committees have no self-governing rights in many areas and are merely quasi-governments. Furthermore, when the villagers committees or peasants dissent from the decisions

made by governments at the upper level, the upper governments will force them to obey these decisions by administrative means. Fourth, village party branches, party committees, and governments at the town and township level always seek to select village heads they favor to ensure that the villagers committees will obey their directions. Before the election of the villagers committees, they recommend the candidates of village heads. These candidates usually have a great chance to be elected, because most voters of the village do not really care about who will be elected as village heads.[15] When analyzing relations concerning self-governance by villagers, some scholars found that relations between departments at different levels in rural areas are contradictory. The compulsory administrative governance of town/township governments conflicts with the increasing self-governance by villagers. The relationship between villagers committees and village party branches is unclear, which has restricted the holistic function of the organizations at the village level. Organizations that are weak and loosely organized at the village level and various acute social contradictions have impeded the economic reforms and social development in rural areas, and are also the major problems occurring in the practice of self-governance by villagers.[16] Others divide the power structure of Chinese rural communities during China's transformation period into three models: The first is the conventional model, which is dominated by clan-based community authority. In this model, villagers committees have no appeal or authority to villagers and are manipulated by clan authority. The second is the modern model, in which the villagers committee, characterized as cohesive and a very important part of power structure, actually becomes one of the authorities (the other is village party branches) that constitute the grassroots autonomy structure. The third is the mixed model in which the function of the villagers committees coexists with the role of clan authority.[17] During the period of China's transformation, the policy of giving priority to economic development has made economic strength the major source of authority. In some areas where village collective economy is quite weak, it is hard for villagers committees to establish authority and credibility without the support of economic strength. People in charge of economic organizations claim to share political power and enter the center of power, which only distorts the exercise of power of "village governance." Like clan authority, the developing religious groups share the governing power in rural areas. If the village party branches are weak and loosely organized, the power of "village self-governance" will be quite decentralized, and its exercise of power will be hardly effective.

Village party branches are the decision-makers in the power system of village governments. How is power exercised in village party branch? The result of a

[15]Zhang Letian, "Rural Politics and Economy after the Abolition of the Commune System—A Reflection on a Survey in Rural North Zhejiang," *Strategy and Management* 1 (1997).

[16]Peng Xianggang and Wang Zhiqiang, "An Analysis on the Relationships in Village Self-Administration," *Public Administration and Law* 1 (1998).

[17]Liu Xitang, "The Power Structure of Rural Communities in China," *CASS Journal of Political Science* 1 (1997).

survey conducted among 300 village party branch secretaries in Dongtai City, Jiangsu Province, reflected the question of "what the village party branches are busy with."[18] The 300 villages were from different economic bases and differed by the villagers' characteristic mind-set, but the statistical result of the 280 items of questionnaires that were received showed that 91 % of the surveyed village party secretaries believed that most villagers except a few outlier households accepted their work on agricultural tax collection, the implementation of family planning policies, funeral ritual reform, and water conservancy projects, which made the work easier than before. However, village party branch secretaries became the "focal point" of the interests of the public authorities and peasants since they had to collect various kinds of fees from peasants. According to the survey, in recent years, apart from the regular agricultural tax, peasants are required to pay many other taxes and fees including asphalt road toll for tractors, the vehicle and vessel tax, bicycle tax, mandatory agriculture insurance, family planning insurance for women of childbearing age, the fee for house number plate, rural cooperative medical insurance, the supplementary agricultural tax, share capitals for rural fund cooperatives, the fine on unauthorized pig slaughter, supplementary tax on silkworm eggs and aquatic products, funding for fertilizer plants, railways and kindergartens, supplementary capital for conservancy projects, and premises licensing fees. Regardless of whether these taxes and fees are reasonable, village officials, especially the village party branch secretaries, are responsible for collecting all of them, which has a negative impact on their relationship with the peasants as well as with other village officials. This is how power is exercised at the village party branch level, with the branch secretaries implementing all the policies made by higher authorities. Additional unnecessary activities carried out by higher authorities at different levels, such as inspections, assessments, and the upgrading of villages, distract the branch secretaries from their regular work, posing risks on the tenure stability of the position. Some branch secretaries describe themselves as the "pig in the middle." They have to complete tasks delegated by the higher authorities while collecting fees and taxes from peasants as well as managing other village affairs. Apart from the weak foundation of the collective economy and several peasant and branch secretaries of poor quality, the major reason for the constraint on the exercise of power by village governments is that policies made by higher authorities are changed by some ones at lower levels. For instance, the party committee and governments at all levels repeatedly stress that the peasants' burden should be controlled and reduced, but some lower authorities may not implement this policy as required. They shift their own burden to and regard peasants as a source of financial revenue. In this way, the onus of contradictory policies is focused on the branch secretaries because they have to collect fees and tax from peasants. According to 78 % of the surveyed branch secretaries, according to regulations on documents, the yearly subscription for the newspapers and journals (mainly run by the Party) should not exceed the village's total fees charged by the

[18]Wang Dehua, Tang Changxi, and Mei Deping, "What Are the Village Party Organizations Working on?" *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 10 (1997).

village organizations and township governments. However, in 1996, a village was charged more than 2000 RMB in fees for the village organization and township government, while the subscription totaled more than 6000 RMB due to pressure from many sources. This is not an isolated case but happens in many villages. Peasants are charged various fees, which increases the workload of the village party branch secretaries. In the exercise of power of village governments, many branch secretaries meet numerous untold difficulties: uncertain career prospects, a heavy workload, and calls to implement policies from various sources. They must bear pressure from both the higher-up authorities and the peasants and must do without administrative expenses. Personal interests cannot be guaranteed. Salary is low and cannot be timely paid, causing family pressure. Such secretaries often live in bad conditions after retirement. Here, we momentarily leave aside the extreme randomness and idleness of the village party branches in the process of the exercise of power.

From the arrangement of institutional strata, it can be seen that the exercise of power in the "village self-governance" of many places in reality is not a complete exercise of power and does not have an operating mechanism for power to be effectively integrated with society.

5.2.3 The Exercise of Power in Social Organizations

Organizations are essential for human life for safety, and it is preconditioned by the fact that human beings are a group-living species. Such organizational demands take on different forms and structures in different production modes, lifestyles, living conditions, and social environments. During the transformation period, as the mode of rural social control changes, the structure of rural community organizations also transitions from uniformity to diversity. Overall, this transition is compatible with the changes in rural economic structure and management structure. The transition of the "direct control" mode means the expansion of rural communities' space for self-adjustment and increasing the risk in survival for members of the rural community. This in turn has prompted the emergence of organizational restructuring and innovative activities which members of the rural community can engage in during the transformation period. The demand for diversified organizations calls for the diversity of organizational restructuring and the taking on of innovative subjects, which is motivated not only by external administrative power but also by the spontaneous and proactive participation of rural community members as well. Furthermore, it calls for the diversification of organizational structures, i.e., the organizational restructuring and innovation have to satisfy the demand of rural community members for different social functions of different organizations, including political, economic, social, and cultural ones. At the same time, endogenous demands such as organizational restructuring and innovative activities often emerge as rural community members possess a higher degree of autonomy. These activities are more voluntary than as a result of external coercion. Generally, rural citizens are not very highly

organized. During the transformation period, the exercise of power in restructured rural community organizations can be simply classified into two groups: the ignored power and dilated power. For example, mass organizations in rural communities such as the Women's Federation and the Communist Youth League are often forgotten and neglected. According to a field study, there are no Youth League committees in nearly half of towns and townships in a city of Hebei Province, not to mention the existence of any organizations in rural communities, thus making it impossible to exercise power. Even if such organizations exist, they are on the margins of the power structure and cannot exert their organizational function; the dilated power in rural communities relies on economic, patriarchal, and religious organizations as well as on social forces. These organizations are also what affect the political participation of rural citizens most widely and deeply. A brief analysis of these organizations is as follows:

First, economic organizations. During the transformation period, economic organizations came to be increasingly created by members of the rural community. To account for the different innovative subjects, which did not previously exist, these economic organizations can be classified into organizations of collective ownership, individual ownership, private ownership, and joint-stock (shareholding) ownerships. The coexistence of economic organizations of various compositions and levels is beneficial to nurturing and raising the peasants' organizational awareness, increasing a sense of financial security of rural communities and their members, and brings about organizational changes of rural communities. The new areas concerning rural organizations tend to be of relatively sound economic strength. Rural citizens also gain more opportunities in political participation in the exercise of power and thus obtain more of a right to speak and influence political life of rural communities. In some places, there are also innovative subjects who manipulate their wealth to interfere with the administrative affairs of villages. Their increasing right to speak out and influence causes some township governments to often rely on these innovative subjects to maintain the exercise of power.

Second, patriarchal clans. In China, the patriarchal clan is a natural social phenomenon. Based on blood relationships, the traditional patriarchal clans are the major community organization with a certain extent of internal authority, independence, coerciveness, and emotionality. They feature a seniority-based leadership structure in the family or clan headed by the clan leader. During the transformation period, traditional patriarchal clans revived and developed as an integral social force by meeting the rural citizens' demand for organizations. There are many causes including historical, cultural, political, and economic reasons. Due to China's political system, basic national conditions, and continuous development of an outward-looking economy in rural communities, patriarchal clans have extremely limited political and economic resources. However, as they have broad cultural resources, which not only control the beliefs and sentiments of the clansman, but also implicate the physical carriers of such beliefs and sentiments, patriarchal clans play the role of providing social services by integrating interpersonal relationships in the rural society. Moreover, as the economic organizations tend to be based on family clans and the power of "township government and

village self-governance" weakens, patriarchal clans in some places have become a force in the exercise of rural power. The dilated patriarchal force in some places has severely interfered with the legal construction of the rural society. A few authorities of "township government and village self-governance" also integrate such dilated power into their own exercise of power.[19]

Third, religious organizations. During the transformation period, the emergence of religious organizations in some rural communities came to meet the demand of rural citizens for organizations. According to research on the ideological conditions of modern farmers made by the Publicity Department of CPC Yantai Municipal Committee, the religious organizations show a tendency to expand in rural communities and have five new characteristics[20]: (i) Religious organizations develop rapidly. Registered religious people in Yantai City have grown over 30 times in seven years, from 783 in 1990 to over 30,000 at present; (ii) the average age of religious believers has been dropping. The majority of believers used to be people in their 60s, but now this figure is replaced by those under the age of 50, among whom young people under the age of 30 make up over 20 %; (iii) religious believers have higher literacy levels. About half of them have received secondary education, and a few of them have received higher education; (iv) believers have diversified occupational backgrounds. In the past, believers were mainly rural housewives, but now come from all walks of life, including peasants, employees of township enterprises, individual industrial and commercial households, and even retired cadres and rural party members. Many laid-off workers from failed, loss-making, discontinued, or partially shutdown enterprises have participated in religious activities in the past two years; and (v) illegal religious activities take place frequently. 75 gathering venues for unlawful assembly were found in Yantai City. Some believers engage in underground activities with believers from other provinces and cities. As a highly organized, programmatic, and normalized social organization with direct influence on human emotions, religious organizations have a certain number of members, rigorous power structures, and social integration functions. During the transformation period, as a dilated power, religious forces in some places also destroy organizational socialization and interfere with township and village affairs under certain applicable conditions. Some rural grassroots organizations even make use of religions to carry out work. Some village party committees could not play a leading role in village governance, thus resorting to religious approaches to support their administration; some village party committees and villager committee leaders took church buildings as their meeting venues and employed religious teachings to elaborate their rationale behind policies and decisions such as collectively funded education, the one-child policy, collection of village reserves in advance, and promotion of public welfare and related activities, so

[19]To learn more about the danger of clan forces, see there search team of the Office of CPC Wanzai County Committee in Jiangxi Province, "Reflections and Investigation on Current Rural Clan Activities," *Review of Politics* 4 (1997); Chen Baoliang, "Clan Activities: A Social Problem of High Priority," *Tribune of Study* 7 (1997).

[20]Investigation team of the Publicity Department of CPC Yantai Municipal Committee, "A Survey of Current Peasant Ideology," *Review of Politics* 8 (1998).

as to guide and involve villagers; Some village officials dared not to perform their duties as administrative officials, but instead, they chose to serve the public in the name of Akhoond or priests. The main reason was a lack of political sense and judgment of the village officials, especially the secretary of village party committee and chairman of villagers committee, who were confused about the intrinsic difference between the CPC nature, guiding principles, and religious teachings and were unclear about the CPC's policies, relevant laws, and regulations on religion, and unable to realize the severe consequences of adopting a religious approach for administrative governance. By applying the religious oriented approach, they actually left their political, ideological, and cultural responsibilities regarding village administration at the mercy of religious groups at great risk. Due to a lack of effort to enhance political literacy and mind-sets of rural CPC members, administrative officials, and peasants, quite a few peasants were unable to tell the difference between the CPC efforts aimed at improving well-being and religious attempts to attract followers. Some peasants, including quite a number of village officials, were even inclined to equate the two as one, and their confusion often led to mistakes in activities. Some village administrators, especially members of the village party committee and the villager committee, displayed weak leadership and low morale and were incompetent to guide and help villagers to rise above their poverty and to gain common prosperity. As they were unable to promote rural economic development and build public trust and confidence, some villagers were attracted by religious groups, which jeopardized the leading role of grassroots CPC committees in rural areas.

Fourth, social organizations. Social organization refers to the type of informal organization possessing political and economic power to some extent, which is comprised of a group people, including leaders and ordinary members, sharing the same or similar background, status, and environment, pursuing the same interest, and following the same rules so as to realize common objectives. During the transformation period, differentiated interest groups were established due to multiple factors such as professional specialization in rural areas, power stratification, class division, and improvement of individual independence and mobility. Under specific circumstances, such interest groups may develop into distinctive social organizations in order to protect their own interests, such as the Self-Employed Laborers' Association, National Aging Committee, and other organizations formed by members of sworn loyalty to each other. However, aspects of these social organizations could turn into violent gangs under specific conditions. For instance, clans can expand into a local violent force or illegal religious groups such as heretical cults where unemployed rural villains or hooligans from the unemployed group formed into violent gangs. In some rural areas, there even emerged village tyrants or other forms of oppression. "A few grassroots officials even employed violent gangs to address disputes and problems"[21] within certain rural communities.

[21]"To Resolutely Put an End to the Abuse of Gang Violence," Research Office of the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee (1997), 326.

5.2.4 The Exercise of Power in Rural Areas and Peasants' Political Participation During the Transformation Period

Mature organizations propel the progress of society and can be regarded as a symbol of social development. During the transformation period, the emergence and improvement of political, economic, and cultural organizations, serving as a distinctive feature of rural development, became a critical factor driving the political, economic, and cultural development in rural areas. Though there was a scarce presence of organizations, even a shrinking of organizations in rural communities, the development of organizations still demonstrated a variety of distinctive characteristics in general. Such intensified growth of rural organizations led to an increased complexity in the exercising of power. Specifically, as "township government" and "village self-governance" did not generate sufficient room for social involvement within a formal institutional framework, the exercise of the governing power would become increasingly decentralized. Besides, inconsistencies tended to arise between social powers and formal powers as a result of an underdeveloped social participation mechanism and ineffective channels for expressing interests. Therefore, peasants may come to be involved in disordered political participation under the following conditions:

First, some township governments experienced tremendous difficulty in the exercise of power, featuring weak leadership and low morale. In this case, policies and instructions could not be effectively implemented, resulting in the deterioration of governmental authority and intensified tensions between government officials and the public. With the explosion of peasant discontent, there even emerged extreme situations where peasants initiated protests against the township government and against government officials. Thus, in order to maintain the regular exercise of township governance, some township party committees and governments tended to choose the following three categories of candidates as potential village officials: (i) competent people with public recognition; (ii) candidates who were able to extend great influence through village clans or religious groups; and (iii) tough and sturdy persons possessing the power of deterrence. The township government upheld that "as iron was struck with a hammer made of steel, and thieves could be caught by employing their counterparts, the unruly would be subdued by the undisciplined," thus designated some undisciplined villagers to deal with their obstinate community members who were unwilling to make due tax payments. However, such undisciplined groups were usually comprised of gangs and hooligans. Therefore, involving the last two categories into the township government became a gigantic impediment for regular implementation of decisions, guidelines, and policies of the CPC.

Second, political rights concerning village self-governance were eroded, with peasants' political participation rights either being deprived, restricted, or substituted. For instance, during regular elections in villages of Tangzhuang Township, Henan Province, in 1996, over 60 deputies to the people's congress were "elected"

by deceptive practices such as leaving out voter registrations, voter ID card delivery, and disclosures of the voters' list, candidates list, and election date prior to elections, leaping the scheduling of election meetings, designating candidates under the table by township officials, and casting votes without peasants' consent or authorization, thus resulting in the violation of political rights of more than 20,000 villagers. In Tangxi Village, the township election committee and village officials convened 12 community leaders and required them to cast the 2060 votes of the entire village as "duly" representatives, and each of them was paid by 5 RMB for their "temporary service."

Third, the innovative subjects of these economic organizations tended to control village affairs by leveraging their economic power. In early 1995, after investigating 154 underdeveloped villages of Wuyi County, Hebei Province, the county government found out that the main cause of such backwardness was that some rich families, by employing their economic influence, interfered in village affairs and instigated disorder in leading groups in the village. For instance, some wealthy villagers based the legitimacy of their interference in village administration on their previous offering of financial support and physical goods to the village; and some recommended themselves or their most intimate acquaintances by means of illegal practices to realize control over village affairs during general village elections.

Fourth, the power of social organizations was unrestrained, involving some political participation of peasants into the framework of their power exercise. The rampant expansion of such social organizations not only violated independent political participation of peasants, but also exerted severe interference on village administration. For instance, according to investigations in some prefecture-level cities and counties in Shanxi Province such as Yuncheng, Changzhi, Xinzhou, Lvliang, Datong, Shuozhou, and Jinzhong, there were considerably increased religious activities, even illegal religious practices, which could be reflected in the following aspects: (i) drastic expansion of followers and wide extension of activities. For instance, from 1988 to August 1996, the number of followers of religious groups in Youyu County rose by almost 50 times; existing followers in Xinrong District of Datong City account for 1 % of the total population; the number of Christians in Wenxi County alone increased by 3262 in the past six years, and there was an increasing spread of their religious activities; within the 13 townships in Xinjiang County, religious activities and followers could be found in nearly each of their 188 villages and; (ii) dominating administrative power and interfering in village affairs. In Qinjiazhuang Village of Huguan County, the village party committee had never held a meeting since 1993, and the village radio station was dominated by religious cults for their own publicity. In fact, the administrative authority of the party committee and villagers committee was taken over by these cults. The cult heads forced previous CPC and villager committee leaders to kneel before the priest and worship God by extending influence on acquaintances and manipulating public opinions in the name of spreading religious enlightenments; (iii) severely disturbing rural social disorder. In Fenyang County, the local Catholic Church had disputes with rural residents over property boundaries.

Colluded with Catholics in Wenshui County, the followers in Fenyang instigated violence that finally led to injuries of quite a number of people. In some counties of Changzhi City such as Wuxiang, Tunliu, and Huguan, church and temple buildings were nationalized and transformed into bulk grain warehouses or grain shops after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Since the year of 1992, some Catholics had undertaken a series disturbing activities to state-owned grain depots, including attempts to take them over, claiming a shortage of Catholic churches and religious sites; and (iv) expanding targets to CPC members and government officials. A CPC member surnamed Zhang at Dongbei Village, Yangyu Township, and a CPC member surnamed Ren at Feng Village, Hedi Township of Wenxi County joined the Disciples sect (Mentuhui society), an illegal religious organization, and were excessively engaged in attracting more believers among their acquaintances and relatives and reaching out to nearby villages; a CPC member surnamed Xi, also the Dongyadi Township Business Administrator of Licheng County, had conducted illegal religious activities to disperse heretical ideas in 3 villages within 2 townships even since he joined the Omniscience sect (Quanfanwei society). He spread rumors that "Trusting in God removes disease, dispels disaster, and brings blessings," and deceived people to put faith in the cult.

In summary, the exercise of powers in rural areas imposed far-reaching influence on the approach and dimensions of peasants' political participation during the transformation period.

5.3 Characteristics of Peasants' Mandatory Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

Among the various factors that contributed to greater non-institutional participation during the transformation period, being drawn into organizations may be more important than being lured by interests. During the transformation period, peasants demanded to be part of an organization for security and economic reasons. A survey conducted by the Rural Affairs Office of the Jilin CPC Provincial Committee showed that peasants had strong demand for organizations.[22] According to them, workers had labor unions, businessmen and industrialists had federations, self-employed workers had associations, and people working in cities had public institutions. Only peasants were left out. After peasants farmed land by household, they no longer needed to contact and cooperate with others. As a result, they entered the market by household and were faced with higher exchange costs. Unable to bear risks, they suffered great losses. Since peasants were weak in the market, with no one to turn to, they could only swallow up their losses and the unfair treatment, unable to fight back. This shows that peasants were not

[22] *Research on Strengthening the Class Basis of the Ruling Party*, 271.

sufficiently organized and unable to protect themselves. This is the analysis of peasants' demand for organizations from the perspective of economic security.

Increased demand for organizations laid the foundation for restructuring and innovating organizations. It also signaled peasants' willingness to be involved in organizations. During the transformation period, changes in the control mode in rural society indicated that the state would withdraw its control from areas beyond its responsibility. But when the state was temporarily unable to protect peasants by forming peasant organizations and did not take the initiative to satisfy peasants' demand for organizations, peasants then were drawn to the restructured or innovated organizations. If the state failed to create reasonable and legitimate institutions or makes sound policies to accommodate these organizations, peasants' political participation could only be non-institutional. The development of rural organizations also made it more complicated to execute power in rural communities. As each organization had its own power structure and own way of exercising power that were independent of others, conflicts were sure to arise between different organizations in the absence of a goal agreed upon unanimously or at least by the majority. In this context, peasants involved in organizations had no choice but to join the conflict.

5.3.1 Analysis of Why Non-institutional Participation Was Mandatory on Peasants

The mandatory non-institutional participation of peasants clearly shows that its creation is driven by one or more authoritative forces. The so-called mandatory non-institutional participation of peasants refers to the irrational, anomic, or abnormal behavior of individual peasants, peasant groups, or peasant communities that are involved in organizations or organized collective activities, attempting to influence the political process in a certain way, method, or channel, under the pressure of one or more authoritative forces in rural power exercise, especially due to the interference of the government authority. Mandatory non-institutional participation of peasants is closely associated with the change in social control mode.

The peasants' non-institutional participation was referred to as mandatory for the following reasons. First, there was the pressure from one or more authoritative forces, particularly from the introduction and implementation of government orders and laws. Second, the various powers in exercise and their relationships were not defined by rational and legitimate institutions. Third, peasants were forced by the organizations they were involved in or manipulated by authorities. During the transformation period, the control mode in rural society was changing alongside the management structure of rural society. In rural communities, every organization pursued utility maximization in power exercise. If all organization did this rationally, the common utility goal of the community would not be undermined. In particular, without institutional regulations of formal and informal exercise of power, "participation" meant being part of the conflict but being outside

the institution, unless there was an force imposed capable of effective coordination, or unless each organization was motivated by extraordinary incentives that are needed for mobilizing political resources, but are not conducive to the goal of common utility in rural communities. Two points should be made concerning the effective coordination of imposed powers and provision of incentives. First, in the management structure of democracy and the rule of law, rural communities are controlled by a certain imposed power beyond all organizations. This power lies with the grassroots organizations of CPC, whose authority is granted by the Constitution. In rural areas where the Party plays a leading role, even in the absence of institutional regulation concerning the exercise of formal and informal power, all organizations would function smoothly in a coordinated and cooperative way toward the goal of common utility and bear the necessary costs. Here, "participation" is harmonious and cooperative. But if the Party does not lead or fails to lead, the conflict would increase between formal and informal powers, possibly causing "participation" to fall beyond the scope of institutions. Second, who can provide the extraordinary incentives? Is it the state? The state, with its own double goals of utility—to maximize political support and economic benefit, would at best provide neutral polities, but not extraordinary incentives, when weighing the relationships between all interest groups. In rural communities, the resources are limited. The extraordinary incentives received by one or several organizations would harm the interests of other organizations. Since they are not treated fairly or protected, the friction remains in the exercise of powers. Institutional regulation should be put in place to make sure that the power exercise was within the management structure of democracy and rule of law. When there are no sufficient or functioning institutions, the institutional function of ideology ought to be made full use of for persuasion.

Unlike induced non-institutional participation, mandatory non-institutional participation is forced. But, different from mobilized participation, it attempts to influence the government's decision-making processor policy implementation through the power of organizations. Moreover, this type of participation is both influential and costly, thus often under the special attention of or restricted by formal power beyond communities. Therefore, it is low in efficiency.

The institutional school attributes the inefficient institutional arrangement and the inability of the state to address institutional imbalance to policy failure and summarizes the reasons as follows: the preferences of rulers and bounded rationality, ideological rigidity, bureaucracy, conflict of interests among groups, and limitation of social science knowledge.[23] This is also why the state fails to establish institutions needed by the society. Only after eliminating these factors can the state remedy the persistent problem of insufficient and ineffective institutions. In the transformation period, to resolve the issue of continuous expansion of peasants' mandatory non-institutional participation, it is imperative to straighten out the relationships between CPC and the government, formal and informal powers, and

[23] *Property Rights and Institutional Change*, 397–400.

internal and external exercise of formal and informal power, respectively. Meanwhile, the state needs to regularly establish and improve necessary institutions according to actual needs.

5.3.2 Characteristics of Peasants' Mandatory Non-institutional Political Participation

Peasants' mandatory non-institutional political participation during the transformation period was closely related to the changes in rural control mode. It also had a hierarchical structure as the induced non-institutional participation. The hierarchical structure of peasants' induced non-institutional participation was reflection of the same structure in power distribution. Peasant leaders who took important positions in their organizations often took the lead in political participation, while ordinary members without access to real power were only followers. Case studies on peasants' non-institutional participation in China during the transformational period reveal that the leaders or core members were able to collect all the complaints of peasants and instigate them to mass petition or even storm the government compound. The following are the examples: (i) people who were targeted at previous public criticisms or whose fathers or grandfathers were suppressed during the land reform; (ii) citizens punished by the authorities during the "strike hard" campaign, local hooligans, or gangster leaders; (iii) people harboring resentment because they were punished for violating the one-child policy, or because their property was confiscated by local officials, or because they were dissatisfied with the settlement of civil disputes (most people fell into this category); (iv) village officials who retired, resigned, or were dismissed from their posts; (v) patriarchs or clansmen who instigated peasants to join their scheme of replacing village authorities by threatening to stop helping them hold weddings or funerals; (vi) priests or followers of underground religious organizations; (vii) innovative subjects of a few economic organizations; and (viii) village officials trying to exert pressure on their superiors. These people had more exposure to the outside world than ordinary peasants, especially to politics. It was often believed that peasants were forced to join mass petitions or to storm government compounds, because their contact with politics was only limited to paying taxes, voting every few years (some people were even deprived of this right), and occasional encounters with government officials. They mainly lived near their land.

The mandatory non-institutional political participation was a result of uncoordinated rural powers, which subsequently led to conflicts. Therefore, one of the main features of peasants' mandatory non-institutional participation was resistance. For example, one of the major recent discontents of rural communities toward the government is that peasants have too much burden, which was then brought out via induced non-institutional participation of peasants. However, a new trend has emerged in recent years. Peasants in a few villages are starting to form groups and opposing local authorities. Such organizations were resistant because they were

organized in a way that was locally recognized. Some formed "petition groups," while others joined "leader groups." They had inflammatory slogans, such as "Alleviating burdens on peasants, Anti-corruption and Anti-exaggeration." They held various activities such as showing movies to peasants while promoting their cause. They did not have a fixed venue, but once they needed to gather the crowd, for example, when they had a conflict with local authorities, thousands of people would show up all at once. They also had leaders and funds. These leaders were competent people that emerged from peasants and were funded by fellow peasants to petition, to launch propaganda or to initiate other activities. Though there were only a few such groups which were still in their infancy, it endangered the society. Therefore, active measures should be taken to avoid the following: the further expansion of such groups, especially the emergence of cross-regional alliances to form sizable influence; the formation of factions or gangs with religious ideals or in collaboration with organizations based on common economic interests, religious beliefs, or clans; and the formation of political organizations manipulated by people or forces with political agendas. Therefore, rural community organizations during the transformational period played less of the roles of formal organizations and more of the roles of informal organizations. In the meantime, civil organizations sprouted. As a result, the establishment of a formal and well-functioning institutional channel for peasants to express their views was put on the government agenda.[24]

The mandatory non-institutional political participation of peasants during the transformational period was usually on a large scale due to their involvement in many organizations. Meanwhile, since both active and passive participants were involved in power struggle, they bore high risks and costs. Therefore, another feature of such participation is a considerable amount of risk. Sometimes, peasants were actually tricked into participating. For example, when the "township government and village self-governance" system relied on patriarchal, religious, gangster forces and rich people, then peasants controlled by these forces had no choice but to comply. In other cases, peasants did not want to participate but had to do so due to member obligations. For instance, peasants in some patriarchal clans may participate at the request of their leaders. Thus, all cases of the mandatory non-institutional political participation of peasants were compulsive and involuntary.

The current situation shows that the mandatory non-institutional political participation of peasants during the transformation period is not only expanding, but also is better organized. Ideally, being better organized means that such political participation aggregates the power of its members, which is conducive to

[24]The author has observed that according to many scholars, it is necessary, in light of the underdevelopment of mass organizations in the transformation period, to establish a peasant association as a medium between peasants and the market and government in the rural organization system at the grassroots level. Some scholars have put forward their opinions on how to set up such an organization. For more details, see *A Study on the Systems of Rural Grassroots Social Organizations in China*, 207–211. Others have proposed to establish a nationwide peasant organization. For more details, see Wang (1996), 79–80.

achieving a balance of forces within the rural community. But it may also result in the emergence of illegal forces, which may push the control mode of some villages back to the protective brokerage mode with tight control and some rural communities may become inward looking. This is worthy studying.

5.4 Innovative Subjects in Economic Organizations—Analysis of Economic Gentry's Interference in Political Affairs

Since the third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978, rural China has embarked on its transformation from traditional to modern and peasants have become richer. The authority structure in rural society has undergone great changes. New authorities that could bring peasants new and richer life emerged. A number of competent persons stood out, either for becoming the first to get rich or for leading their fellow peasants to get rich together. Most of them were the innovative subjects in economic organizations and constituted the "natural authority" of rural society. We may refer to the many such authorities as the "economic gentry" of rural society.

With the political and economic development in rural China, economic gentry have become more visible, with increasing influence on rural society. This has attracted more attention. As a special group of peasants, their political participation, their interference in political affairs in particular, has become an increasingly prominent issue and needs to be studied from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

5.4.1 Economic Gentry—Product of Institutional Change

The traditional Chinese rural society was in some way self-governed by gentry who played a major role in maintaining the order and upholding ethical values of rural community. They were counted as half government officer and half commoner. They were responsible for moral judgment, dispute mediation, shaping community morality, promoting public welfare, managing relations with other villages, and serving as liaison of the imperial court. This special and indispensable class of people formed the foundation for grassroots politics in the traditional Chinese society. This unique "gentry system" was first undermined when China was forced to modernize itself and was then uprooted when CPC, as an external force, effectively controlled the villages. The consolidation and integration of rural and central politics was thus achieved.

With central tasks shifted at the third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, all villages in China began to concentrate on "economic construction." Thanks to the implementation of household responsibility system, agricultural

management system went through major internal reform and adjustment. Problems such as outdated agricultural productive relations and management models that were incompatible with agricultural productivity and peasants' mind-set, economic status, and know-how at that time were solved. As a result, the course of China's rural reform was accelerated, leading to the disintegration of people's commune system and changing the landscape of economic and administrative management. Means of production were no longer owned by people's commune, production brigades, and production teams, and production teams were no longer the most basic unit. The "integration of government administration and economic management" was also abolished. This propels the development of rural economy into a diversity of economic entities that integrate technology, capital, workforce, and means of production. China's rural economy has become more specialized, commercialized, and socialized. The structure of China's rural economy has improved, and China's economy has diversified. Rural democracy was also promoted at grassroots level. In short, the institutional innovation in rural society has greatly changed the structure of rural authorities.

The household responsibility system allows peasants to enjoy autonomy in production and to share rural resources. They are no longer bound by their obligations in interpersonal relations and in division of labor. The improved "township government and village self-governance" model grants peasants more access and greater rights to political participation. However, the vast majority of them are not used to all these changes yet. Their traditional lifestyle determines that they cannot be voluntary participants in local political and economic activities, as they either lack the awareness or lack the capabilities to perform public duties despite their enthusiasm. Peasants are after freedom, equality, and security. Deep down, they need authorities for management, support, and guidance. However, as external political control weakened, their demand cannot be met. A large number of more powerful "economic gentry" then emerged. An institutional framework where people can influence each other leads to a cooperative and competitive relation of social, political, and economic orders. The contemporary "economic gentry" are the product of institutional change, and their appearance in large number is the representation of the unity of history and logic, which is illustrated in the following four points:

(i) The average peasants have never given up their demand for authorities. Even during the period of people's commune, they secretly desired power and prestige. It can be understood when put in cultural and psychological perspectives;
(ii) With the collapse of people's commune system, the economic life in rural areas has become relatively more liberalized. The government has become less interested in interference and their control has weakened, which lays the institutional foundation for the emergence of new authorities;
(iii) As China's social development was centered on economic growth, villagers began to seek material wealth in an increasingly open society, and those who got rich first and were able to benefit rural communities naturally came to be revered and were followed by villagers; and

(iv) As national policies encouraged some to get rich first, those first to become well-off were regarded as models and would undoubtedly win the recognition of both the superior officials and the grassroots villagers.

The "power" of the "economic gentry" depends largely on their personal background. They usually have rich experiences, a broad vision, a decent education, past work experience as government officials, communication with the outside world, notable family background, etc. But the difference between the economic gentry and the traditional ethics gentry is that the former are more economically advantaged in terms of professions, property, and allocated resources.

Due to the combined effects of culture, psychology, institution, reality, policy, and individuality, the economic gentry possess more internal and external power in politics than the traditional ethics gentry. On the one hand, the economic gentry are convincing to peasants. On the other hand, they can easily seek support from authorities because they have direct access to resources and have direct power to distribute these resources.

As an outcome of institutional transformation, the economic gentry are the resource generated from rural institutional reform, which, in turn, are self-served by this resource. The economic gentry are a kind of dynamic resource, able to allocate and leverage other resources. The concept of the economic gentry is not confined to any specialized field. They play an extensive range of social roles.

The role and impact of the economic gentry in rural politics are increasingly noticed and studied at present.

5.4.2 The Economic Gentry's Interference in Political Affairs

The villages in China today have been controlled by an external political resource, which linked the interests of peasants closely to those of the nation. However, the exercise of power in traditional Chinese villages is different from that of the nation. The traditional ethics gentry used coercive, coordinative, and moral power to interfere in political affairs. The economic gentry, however, interfered in political affairs through the following three ways: (i) taking an official position; (ii) joining the CPC, an external political organization to guarantee power; and (iii) exerting their influence.

Joining the CPC. It is an efficient way for the economic gentry to interfere in political affairs. It was reported that in a town in southern China that wealthy owners of companies account for 57 % of the total 61 newly registered CPC members. In rural areas, the CPC committee encouraged its members to take the lead to get rich, which brought good opportunity for the "capable individuals" to join the Party. Some leaders of the CPC committees in the village even believed that "the rich were heroes, while the poor were nothing." They admitted the rich into the CPC regardless of their political literacy when recruiting new members and even

compelled the rich to join in the Party against their will. Also, some party committees favored the "capable individuals" who were good at doing business or at management, without measuring whether they were qualified to practice the Party principles or whether they were willing to work for the public.

It is very important for the economic gentry, who are not yet CPC members, to join the CPC if they want to further wield their political influence. However, there are still many people who joined the Party since they share the lofty ideals of communism and uphold the spirit of serving the people. The following two cases demonstrate that the economic gentry joined the CPC as "millionaires" to promote common prosperity. Wang Tingjiang, who used to be illiterate and poor, is a local peasant of Shenquan Village in Luozhuang Town, Linyi City of Shandong Province. However, driven by the opportunities brought about by the reform and opening-up policy, he gained great wealth through hard work and became a millionaire in Yimeng mountain area. In September, 1989, he donated his porcelain factory, which had 4.2 million RMB in fixed assets and 1.8 million RMB in current capital, to the village collectives. In November, Wang was admitted by the CPC and became a formal member. As a simple and kind peasant from an old revolutionary base area, he said "During the war period, countless soldiers sacrificed their lives in the Yimeng mountain area for the liberation and our peaceful life. Some 60 thousand names were recorded, while there were even more anonymous ones. Compared to them, what I've done was insignificant. I only donated a factory to help our fellow peasants live a relatively-comfortable life." In December, Wang, quite popular among the villagers, was unanimously elected as director of the villagers committee. Later, he was elected as village party branch secretary. And the same goes for Gong Shiquan, a local of Haihewan Village in Jinnan District, Tianjin, who led the peasants in his village out of poverty. When he joined the CPC, he donated his motorcycle factory, worth 5 million RMB, to the village collectives. Villagers respected him and elected him as director of the villagers committee and village party branch secretary.

Taking Official Positions. If one serves as the government official, no matter which administrative level he/she belongs to, one will obtain the power of distribution over social resources. There are three possible situations where economic gentry decide to be government officials: (i) Non-CPC members will join the CPC first and then apply for government jobs; (ii) CPC members apply for government jobs; and (iii) Non-CPC members apply for official positions not limited to party members, including such positions as members of the villagers committee and accountants. However, there are different reasons for taking official positions—some want to serve the people, others seek personal gains. Some local party branches even emphasize that "the rich people" have rights to manage the village, which creates a political environment for the economic gentry to enter the political stage.

Exerting influence. Since the economic gentry have money and financial controls, they adopted various means to get involved in the political affairs in townships and villages. This situation was dubbed "pulling the strings from behind the scenes" and manifested in the following three ways: (i) In village regular

elections, some villagers are paid and instigated by the gentry to commit crimes, retaliate on village officials and attempt to seize the political power. For example, a rich family in a village held a grudge against an honest and clean village official and spread the word during the election that anyone who did not vote for that village official would be invited to dinner in a restaurant. With such interference, the village official lost his election in the end; (ii) the rich and powerful families have the final say over major decisions in the village. Though they may not hold office, village officials speak for them alone; and (iii) the gentry may recommend some politically unreliable people who are also of poor quality to the leadership positions. These people tend to use improper means to resolve the disputes and only care about the interests of a small number of rich people. The gentry actually seek their own personal benefit rather than recommending the virtuous and the able.

However, the influence exerted by the gentry also has a certain prestige. They make full use of their authority and negotiating power with the government to better safeguard peasants' legitimate interests and lawful rights to form organizations.

The economic gentry interfere in political affairs in rural areas at the grassroots level through the following three ways: joining the CPC, taking official positions, and exerting their influence on villagers.

5.4.3 The Pros and Cons of the Economic Gentry's Interference in Political Affairs

The "economic gentry" are a dynamic concept, and their interference in political affairs is an evolving phenomenon. Thus, it is irrational to arbitrarily make positive or negative judgments. However, we can do some analyses on such interference that has already had an impact.

The positive impact of the economic gentry's interference in political affairs can be summarized as follows:

First, since most of the economic gentry have better economic conditions as well as stronger operational and management skills, they and their views are well received by the public. They have the favorable conditions and capacities to make donations or contribute financial aid when the village community lacks funds or starts a project for the public welfare; they are also able to give help when poor villagers encounter difficulties. In villages with a weak or no collective economy, the economic gentry's interference in political affairs is more commonly seen and works relatively well. Also, masses are also supportive of appointing the economic gentry to government posts.

Second, the economic gentry can guide and help villagers to achieve common skills and techniques for gaining wealth. The economic gentry are usually smart, financially well-off, experienced in management. When the socially responsible economic gentry are appointed village officials, they would do their utmost to help

villagers shake off poverty and gain common prosperity through such ways as developing aquaculture, cash crops, and small household industries.

Third, it can boost the efficiency of handling various village affairs. When well-educated village officials get rich, they see village affairs from a broader perspective. They usually serve as strong advocates and practitioners of CPC policies and guidelines for villages and have outstanding performance. The village is in great order under their management.

The negative impacts of the interference of the economic gentry in political affairs can be concluded as follows:

First, it can cause great harm by one-sidedly supporting the economic gentry in joining the CPC and taking official positions. The one-sided-support mode has currently been practiced in some villages and undermines the leadership of the CPC, because the governments highlight the candidates' capabilities and disregard their morals or even political ideologies in the selection and appointment of government officials.

Second, social insecurities may easily arise from economic gentry's political interference. According to investigations, after being appointed village heads, some of the economic gentry start to form their own factions, gather local forces of ill repute to control village affairs, or even disrupt the elections. Counting on their wealth, they boast their philosophies: "Money can corrupt the God," "With money, one can control everything," rally and bribe money-driven villagers and gradually form dominating gangs in their locality. They themselves become the heads of these gangs, which gravely tarnish the reputations of the CPC in the masses and exert devastating effects on officials and villagers. After expanding their influence, some even challenge the township party committees and governments by hindering the implementation of government decisions and Party policies.

Third, the interference of the economic gentry in political affairs contributes to the emergence of ultra-powerful families. According to the villagers, some of the economic gentry who run businesses or work outside often travel far back, by bus, train, or even air to cast their sacred ballots before the election day. The fact is that they only want to run businesses rather than serve at government posts, but are thrust into governmental posts by their families who are eager to win power and fame. After taking power, these economic gentry are actually working and seeking interests for their families rather than for the public. Contradictions in the village community are thus intensified and problems between families become more complicated.

Four, these appointed members of the economic gentry can only set aside limited time and energy for government work. For example, some fresh on posts are often passionate and make many promises, but such promise makers are in the minority; some are invariably absent from offices, running their businesses day and night. They entrust all the affairs of the village to others, and neither attend township meetings, nor hold village meetings. They are called "remote-control officials" as they are always absent and handle village affairs via phones; some are worn out by business matters during the day and can not work well at village affairs during the night. Thus, they receive many complaints from the public.

The above analyses of economic gentry's interference in political affairs are made from the perspective of political control. On the one hand, more political

power could be delegated to villagers through the interference of the economic gentry; on the other hand, political rule can also be swayed. The efficiency of governments in using the economic gentry is crucial to the performance of the economic gentry in political affairs.

5.4.4 The Influence of the Economic Gentry's Interference Behavior on the Grassroots Political Model

The economic gentry' interference in political affairs has given rise to many thought-provoking problems. The influence of economic gentry' interference behavior on the grassroots political model in China's rural areas can be considered at least in the following three aspects:

I. Can the economic gentry join the CPC? Under what conditions can they join in the Party? Will a large number of the economic gentry join in the Party affect the achievement of the purpose that the CPC represents the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people? If yes, it will not only impact the grassroots political model, but also the basic political model of the whole country.
II. Whether the economic gentry who serve as government officials can really be entrusted by the masses and as legally authorized deputies who will have an impact on the operation of grassroots politics.
III. The economic gentry's impact on grassroots politics will, on the one hand, likely constitute a pressure group facilitating the construction of democratic politics, and on the other hand, it may become a disreputable force or a clan force, which both oppose the governments and suppress the peasants, thus hindering the construction of democratic politics.

The role of the economic gentry in and its influence on the grassroots political model in China's rural areas are new issues emerging in China's development to which close attention should be paid.

5.5 Case Studies of Peasants' Mandatory Non-institutional Political Participation During the Transformation Period

5.5.1 "Villains Governing Village"—Non-institutional Participation Within the Institutional System

Appointing "villains" to combat evil and govern village is actually incorporating them into the institutional system. However, their governing approach is not in

accordance with the institution. Therefore, interference by villains in the political system is a mandatory non-institutional participation.

According to a readers' survey published in *Procuratorial Daily* on October 1, 1998, there was a strange phenomenon in the then construction of grassroots organizations in rural areas: Some town and township governments selected disreputable villains from large families with many brothers to solve the difficulties in collecting grain fees, electing government officials and putting things into order in some rural areas. Instead of solving the problem, this "like cures like" practice might plunge the rural grassroots organizations into a more passive, awkward, and disordered plight. Therefore, this practice must be resolutely curbed.

"Villains governing villages" is the town and township governments' last resort, aiming to: (i) realize the effect of "like curses like" by asking the bold villains to collect grain fees from problematic households and retaliate against households; (ii) guide the villains, who make villages unable to be in peace, to forsake their disreputable ways and learn to do good through putting them in major important positions and keeping them in control; and (iii) ensure that villages have government officials. At present, there are indeed difficulties in electing government officials in some villages, while some speculative villains are making great efforts to become officials. To prevent villages from paralysis, some town and township governments have to appoint villains to deal with village affairs.

Villains governing villages may bring the villages a brief form of peace, but the harm it brings is immeasurable, equal to quenching a thirst with poison. First, villains govern villages with family forces, not through policies and legal knowledge and basic management abilities, hindering the implementation of the Party's rural policies. People accuse them of "wandering along the streets when they should be at meetings, solving problems based on precedent, and promoting village work with rude manners." Villages governed by villains become a vacuum beyond policies and the law. These arbitrary and arrogant rural officials often violate the law and discipline, doing great harm to the image of the Party and governments. Second, their governance gives rise to clan forces, which implies that the town and township party committees give into the disreputable forces in rural areas and acquiesce to the existence of clan and fictional forces. This not only has driven their bad behavior but also will give rise to new forces formed by clan forces and force government officials to lose power, thus influencing some people and impacting political and social stability. Third, villains governing village impair the efficiency of rural grassroots organization. Fourth, it harms relations of the Party and the officials with the masses. Villains are unable to tell right from wrong and good from evil. Their governance of villages hurts the masses' feelings and the Party's conduct and discipline and makes some people distrust and dissatisfied with the Party and governments, thus affecting the stability of rural areas as a whole to some degree.

5.5.2 Peasants' Non-institutional Participation Triggered by Poor Rural Governance

Poor rural governance practiced by the government officials who represent the public authorities in the rural power system may cause strong dissatisfaction among peasants and trigger peasants' mandatory non-institutional participation.

According to folks of Xinqiao Town, Xiangcheng City, Henan Province, the town's comprehensive administration office is a prison rather than a common office. The office director Mr. Yuan often takes advantage of his special status to set up private prisons and illegally detains and interrogates local people by torture and other bullying behavior, which is feared by local people of the town and its neighboring areas.

On an evening of February 1996, Mr. Yuan handcuffed a villager Mr. Wang to the office and beat him savagely on the excuse of uprooting five trees due to the resentment between Mr. Wang and Mr. Yuan's parents. Mr. Wang was released five days later after his families and relatives raised and paid a fine of 4000 RMB and spent 300 RMB printing copies of a "Letter of Confession."

The same was the case with Mr. Hu from the administrative village Zhang Zhuang. He was accused of damaging a sapling and was taken to the comprehensive administration office. Besides that Hu was cruelly beaten and had to pay a fine, each of the village's 115 households were required to pay a fine of 24 RMB in the name of "joint liability" for the unjustifiable reason that the sapling grew on the land of their village.

The same thing happened to a 14-year-old fourth-grade student Gao from Xialiuzhuang Natural Village of Changlou Administrative Village of Xinqiao Town. He was alleged to have damaged a sapling and was required to pay a fine of 4000 RMB and post 14,000 copies of a "Letter of Confession" within the town.

At the end of 1996, Mr. Yuan was detained for illegally detaining villagers by the Xiangcheng Municipal Public Security Bureau, and the comprehensive administration office was shut down by the Xiangcheng People's Court. But one month later, Yuan was allowed to serve his sentence outside of the jail and the office was reopened again.

Another incident happened when the Xinqiao Town Government announced to plant fruit after the wheat harvest. As the CPC Town Committee Secretary of the town, Mr. Zhang sold fruit tree saplings to villagers at a high price by force and gave IOUs to peasants when purchasing grain from them, which incurred dissatisfaction and resentment among the peasants. On May 10, 1996, more than 70 villagers went to the provincial capital Zhengzhou to petition.

On July 30, 1997, a large number of the town's peasants petitioned again, but were stopped halfway by village officials designated by the town government, with only more than 40 finally arriving in Zhengzhou.

Since the peasants petitioned to the provincial capital, officials of Xianqiao Town Government were posted to subordinate villages and were required not to go

back until they solved the problem. In 1996 and 1997, villagers of Xinqiao Town petitioned 31 times.

In order to learn the truth, on July 3, 1998, journalists from of *Guangdong-Hong Kong Information Daily* headed to Xinqiao for direct and in-depth interviews with the villagers, but it became known by village officials, who disrupted the interview plan. When people of Nanliying Village, Hebei Village, and two other villages met these journalists, they immediately knelt down and pleaded to redress their grievances. At 3 p.m. July 4, the journalists' minibus was followed by a car all the way for 30 km since they just set out. Finally, they were stopped and required to identify themselves by policemen who were at the behest of a certain town government officials. In the end, they still did not meet the town committee secretary Mr. Zhang as he claimed that he was too busy with his work to ask for a leave for an interview.

At 7 a.m., three days after the journalists left Xinqiao, they received an anonymous call from Xiangcheng City, saying that "peasants who received your interviews are locked up and out of reach." On the next day, the interview guide Xie was detained by the local police. After being released, he was beaten soundly by two strong men in the street, vomiting large amounts of blood. Later on, he was never heard from again (Referred to *Guangdong-Hong Kong Information Daily*, August 1, 1998).

5.5.3 Over Ten Thousand Peasants Sued the Township Government Over Forced Imposition

The forced imposition of the local government in some rural areas has sparked strong resistance from peasants. Though taking different forms, these resistance efforts share a common feature: coerciveness. In this case, peasants are engaged in political process spontaneously, which can be regarded as a particular non-institutional participation due to its unconventionality.

At 8:30 on August 11, 1998, the Administrative Tribunal of Shaanxi Provincial Higher People's Court was crowded with people, most of whom were migrant workers hailing from Peijiawan Township, Zizhou County working in Xi'an City. They had asked for a leave from their work and came here to audit the second trial of 12,688 peasants suing the township government for increasing their financial burden, so as to show support for their fellow townsmen's fight against the illegal action. Peijiawan is an old revolutionary base area in Shaanxi Province plagued by poor soil fertility and frequent natural disasters. However, the township government levies various incremental taxes that are raised without restriction and are unbearable to local peasants.

In order to fulfill the township government's tasks on taxes, some rural officials took high-pressure measures. They organized a dozen of local thugs to go to villages collecting taxes through various illegal means including arresting, beating, torturing, and denouncing peasants as well as searching their houses.

Ms. Hui is a 60-year-old widow in Liujiage Village. Her husband had won honor during the war years but unfortunately died early. She was supposed to be rationed to relief allowance regularly, but was also apportioned over 420 RMB of undue tax. Since she could not afford the apportioned charge, the thugs hired by the township government took away her door plank. In severe winter, the north wind blowing in was so cold that the old woman could not get by. Her three quilts were also snatched away, along with an old suitcase and a ladder.

Mr. Kang from Zhouyang Village made three cave houses but was imposed taxes of 275 RMB by the township government. When the hired thugs came to his home, he had only 150 RMB, so he told them that he would send them the money after selling his crops. Not happy about this, they abusively cursed him. On the second day, Mr. Kang sent 125 RMB to the township government office, but was shut away in a cave house and beaten heavily. He got a brain concussion, severe lung contusion, and his left eye had almost gone blind. So he had to be hospitalized for four months, during which his sewing machine and bedding were taken away by the township government as a mortgage on the "taxes." Later on, the township government ordered the local police station to put him in prison for 15 days on the charge of interfering with the law enforcement. While in custody, the policemen also instigated his cellmates to give him a good beating.

One of the peasants' strongest concerns is that the public officials cannot only beat villagers for taxes at will, but also can give anyone they disfavor a hard time on an unwarranted charge. Mr. Wang from Wangjia Sanpin Village is a carpenter and once worked for the village secretary who did not pay his due wages long after the work had been done. Mr. Wang's brother helped to argue for it, but was charged by the secretary for refusing to pay taxes. The township government instantly sent men to take him into custody, but since he ran away, they took Mr. Wang instead. They gave him kicks and blows and punished him by parading him around the whole town for a dozen hours, during which he was given no food or water, and his ribs were severely fractured. Even after this, the township government still imposed a fine of 1200 RMB on him before letting the matter go. Since the township government extorted excessive taxes and levies, villagers started to organize themselves spontaneously to fight for their rights. 12,688 out of 18,841 rural citizens in the whole town signed their names on the administrative indictment.

After a half-year of heavy-footed trial of this case, the verdict of the Yulin Intermediate People's Court was finally brought in on March 23, 1998. The court decision was that the Peijiawan Township Government's unreasonable levies, fines, and apportions of 88,983 RMB should be canceled and returned to peasants. The plaintiff had claimed the compensation for medical treatment for the injuries caused by the township government officials, but was rejected by the court for not falling in the scope of administrative litigation. The peasants of Peijiawan were dissatisfied with the written judgment they received and appealed to the Shaanxi Provincial Higher People's Court. The appellant held that the Yulin Intermediate People's Court's judgment was far from just, only identifying 3 out of 11 illegal charge items, so they requested that the court order the township government return 529,599 RMB to them and cover

80,000 RMB of losses arising from the indictment. A journalist learned from interviews that these peasants had been struggling unyieldingly to take the case to court for two years with a view to reduce their unduly burdens. However, the Peijiawan Township Government had not issued the "Transparent Card" that is requested by the central, provincial, and municipal governments to clearly write how much the rural citizens should be taxed. Though cards have been given out in other towns from Zizhou County, no citizen knows how much tax they should pay with a blank card.

During the interview, the reporter also learned that before the Shaanxi Provincial Higher People's Court dealing with this case, a local newspaper reported that the Yulin District Commission for Discipline Inspection had given people in charge of the Peijiawan Township Government "serious punishment." However, all of them were just given punishments by administrative and party discipline departments, and no one was brought to justice because of the crime of false imprisonment or intentional injury.

On June 28, the newspaper further reported the result of the "serious punishment": Party secretary Mr. Miao and township head Mr. Zhang of the Peijiawan Township Government were removed from leadership positions. However, according to an informed source, Mr. Miao was waiting at home for new assignment, while Mr. Zhang had been appointed as the Deputy Party Secretary of Zhougelao Township Government on June 16 after being approved by the Standing Committee of the Party Committee of Zizhou County. It is said that a special note was printed on the appointment document, indicating that Mr. Zhang is in charge as a section-level cadre (Source: *China Asset Newspaper*, October 10, 1998).

5.5.4 "Coping with Higher-Ups"—Peasants' Participation to Deal with Rural Leaders

The inspection and investigation from higher authorities are to find out the implementation of relevant policies, which is an important working method to provide basis for further policy-making. Some officials from rural areas require rural citizens to work jointly with them to "cope with the higher-ups" for the purpose of pursuing their own interests, so peasants are forced to participate in political process. Such phenomena abound, but are rarely analyzed or studied as a mandatory non-institutional participation.

An article written by Wensheng which was published in the 11th volume of *China Comment* in 1998 mentioned that at present, some government officials are not concentrating on how to solve various new problems in the new period, but put their attention and energy to how to "cope with" the superiors.

Located in the east of Henan Province, there is a big county with a large population of over one million, where the one-child policy had not been effectively carried out. It was common to find multiple children rural households in the county, but the county and township officials did not think they had a big problem, as they had made "sufficient and proper" preparation to handle the supervision

from higher-rank officials. They even provided two sets of household registration records for some multiple children families, with one bearing real information for regular purposes and the other carrying fake records specifically designed for dealing with supervision from superior authorities. This county had been rewarded with the title of an outstanding county in implementing the one-child policy. It was only after superior authorities investigated into and verified the county's manipulation of records upon receiving reports that the county was stripped of the title.

There were even some officials who came up with a variety of deceptive methods specifically designed for managing different situations. For instance, when they intended to boast on their administrative performance, they would show higher-rank officials the most developed areas; when they would like to ask for funding or material support, they would instead take their supervisors to the least developed parts; if they wanted an increase in village reserve, they would report a higher average net income of rural residents than the real number. A village party committee secretary in Weinan City, Shaanxi Province, once complained that last year their village suffered natural disasters and consequently reduced harvests, yet the township government required each village record an average net income of 1382 RMB despite of the fact that the real income per rural resident merely accounted for 760 RMB and that he would take criticism from the township government if he did not comply with the threshold.

Of course, high-ranking officials also came up with ideas to address the problem of "coping with supervisory officials." Once the former Premier Zhu Rongji came to Anhui Province to do field study, he dispatched his secretary to investigate at the local level secretly while he listened to administrative reports himself. It turned out that there existed a wide discrepancy between what he heard and what his secretary saw, and thus, he gave severe criticism upon this working style. Wen Jiabao, the then vice premier of the State Council, once conducted an investigation in rural areas of a province. He would not visit the households previously selected by local administrators; instead, he would let his driver stop at his own discretion and dropped by any rural household on a random basis. Once Wen walked into the home of a peasant family and asked the hostess, "What do you think of the township and village officials?" "Today some rural officials are much worse than the Kuomintang!" Her answer shocked Wen, "Could you explain in more detail?" The hostess then said, "Last month several officials came into my home and took hundreds of kilograms of grain away. And when I asked why they did that, they replied 'You can only get your question answered at the township government'." The secretary of county CPC committee was standing there, too. His face turned cold and he wanted to explain himself, yet was stopped by Wen.

5.5.5 Villagers' Non-institutional Participation Aiming for the Rights of Institutional Participation

Exercise of the right to vote and to stand for election as a member of the villagers committee constitutes an essential part of institutional participation right of

peasants. However, in some rural areas, authorities did not change its governing approach with regard to the exercising of rural power in a timely manner, but continued to impose administrative governance over villagers committee through adopting administrative means or altering administrative actions, which impeded the realization of peasants' right to the election of committee members. When the peasants were deprived of such rights or encountered difficulty to fully realize them, they would be forced to fight for their right to institutional participation by means of non-institutional participation.

Case 1: Protest against general elections of villagers committee in Fanyu City

At Daxing Village, Fanyu City, Guangdong Province, villagers in each of the six village groups received notification from their respective group leaders on the evening of October 31, 1998, informing them that each household was permitted to designate only one person to vote in the first-round general election of villagers committee which was to be held the next afternoon and that villagers were only allowed to nominate candidates from their own village groups (one male and one female for average groups, and two males and one female for large groups). A villager surnamed Liang and a villager surnamed Huang from the 4th village group felt something was wrong after receiving the notification. After reviewing the articles published on *Guangzhou Daily* concerning policies and decisions made by the third Plenary Session of the 15th CPC Central Committee and by provincial and city-level authorities, such as the introduction of direct election of village heads, they believed that the notification violated the provision stipulating that "any villager who has reached the age of 18 and has not been deprived of political rights shall have the right to elect and stand for election," thus reducing the number of legitimate voters from over 800 to merely 300. In addition, the prohibition of nominating candidates among different village groups further encroached on democratic rule.

The meeting to elect villagers committee began at about 2:00 p.m. on November 1. Several hundreds of villagers came to the site. Some protested that democratic rule should be implemented and that their votes should only go to the most competent potential leaders. Some other villagers stated that public opinions were not fully respected if not all legitimate voters were provided access to cast their votes. Thus, the objections stopped the ongoing election process. At about 4:00 p.m., township and village officials declared the suspension of the election. The villagers remarked that they were expecting the realization of real democracy in elections someday.

Case 2: "The Peasants' Bible"—the *Organic Law of Villagers Committees*[25]

Liangjiacun Village was known for its impoverishment in Jingxing County, Hebei Province. In the past few years, the village population did not grow at all, but instead encountered a decline. The lyrics of a folk song revealed the difficult

[25] *Tribune of Villages and Townships* 5 (1991).

livelihood in Liangjiacun Village, "Surrounded by natural beauty, blessed with fresh air, yet no one wants to marry the men here." Living with such underdevelopment, the villagers could no longer stand the village officials who "could not catch mice in the kitchen and also did not break any plates" (unable to make any achievements and in the meantime made no mistake). Led by a CPC member and also a retired soldier surnamed Liang, the villagers made a petition to the township government to change the existing village leading group. However, officials of Tianchang Township turned down their request without hesitation, reckoning that the village officials should be given some credit for their hard work if not for any outstanding achievements and that it would trigger a chain reaction which would negatively affect the morale of other village officials if villagers could get what they wanted. Thus, the villagers had no other choice but to adopt a "relentless begging" approach and would spend all of their leisure time pleading with the township government. One day, Liang discovered a booklet named the *Organic Law of Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China (Trial)* on the desk when he came to plead the township officials as usual. He opened it and read it and found that the phrases and sentences had expressed exactly what he intended to petition. This booklet to Liang was like the Bible to a Catholic. Liang took the booklet away "stealthily," and upon his return to the village, he immediately read it to his fellow villagers. The villagers decided that under such a law they could file a claim against the township government for its refusal to organize democratic elections. Thus, they formed three lobbying teams, one to the township government, one to the county civil affairs bureau, and the third, comprised of CPC members, to the organization department of the county organization department. The township government eventually yielded to the gigantic pressure imposed by Liangjiacun villagers and agreed to establish a new villagers committee through democratic elections. At the time of sunset on January 9, 1990, Liangjiacun villagers came and gathered at the village primary school for general elections. Each household would designate a representative to vote, and of the 159 households in the village, over 130 people cast their votes, the largest number since the beginning of contract management by households.

The election result was that the "petition leader" Liang was chosen as the secretary of villagers committee, which was the least wanted outcome and also a huge worry in the eyes of some officials. However, the newly elected villagers committee and the CPC branch continued to strive to expand local development upon its establishment, including creating a reforestation area of 120 μ (1 μ = 667 m^2), building a leak-proof channel of 480 m, and constructing road of 1500 m.

Case 3: People's opinions matter most[26]

In 1990, the election of the villagers committee in Yaomeng Township in Yuncheng City, Shanxi Province, was held not long after the implementation of *Organic Law of Villagers Committees*. At the early stage, most village officials

[26]*Tribune of Villages and Townships* 4 (1994).

wanted to maintain social stability and decided to go with the former "appointment system." But unexpected troubles came. A large number of locals came to the township party committee and government office, demanding that village heads explain why the lawful rights of peasants to vote were denied. They said, "Is the *Organic Law* just something for us to see but never to be implemented?" Some newly appointed officials came to their superiors, complaining that they could get nothing done because the peasants did not recognize their authority. The local leaders felt hard put to cope with the petitioners that were armed with state laws. Ququ and Taoshang villages had the most petitioners who refused to leave without seeing justice done. At the strong demand of peasants, the township authority made an exception for these two villages and implemented "special-zone policies." Formerly appointed officials stepped down, and peasants could directly elect their leaders. This thrilled the villagers, who hurried to tell one another the good news. Although the election was not well planned, the elected leaders were still very competent with high moral standards. In the next three years, the two villages ranked top in governance. By the next election in 1993, they remained to be the only two "model villages of moderate prosperity" in that area. In comparison, the villages with appointed officials had mediocre performance, with some even in paralysis.

The CPC Committee and Government of Yaomeng Township learned the lessons and adopted direct election in 1993. A supervision team and an election office were set up, including leaders from the party committee, the government, and the people's congress of the township. On October 30, all twelve villages successfully concluded their elections. No one, whether elected or not, whether they were frequent petitioners or not, had any complaint. This showed that people's opinions mattered more than those of the officials in selecting and using competent people.

Case 4: Villagers from Shuikou Village in Zaoshi Township, Zixing City, Hunan Province, requested election in an unconventional way[27]

In December 1992, Zixing City held the second election of villagers committee. The candidates were selected by township officials after careful studies. They then consulted a few villagers before calling for a meeting of all party members. At the meeting, the candidate list was released. Since there was little disagreement, the list became official.

The candidates were selected in secret, without public domination. The next day after the list was made public, the election was held.

Youth league branch secretary Mr. Cao and committee member in charge of organization Mr. Liu were open-minded people that were good at organizing and coordinating. They thought highly of themselves and hoped to become leaders of the villagers committee for public service. When the final list of candidates was revealed, they believed the selection process was illegal and undemocratic.

[27]*The Electoral System of Rural Village Committees in China (1993)*, (China Society Press, 1994), 80.

In particular, they thought that the candidates for committee director were of low caliber. Therefore, the two organized their own campaigns and won some support. But with the voting day approaching, it was impossible for them to run for office. So they decided to resort to unconventional actions.

On the night before the election, they put up 74 slogans on white papers at all the 20 villager teams, which read:

1. Join us and reform the electoral system together!
2. Strive for Four Modernizations!
3. Yes to democratic election! No to authoritarian appointment!
4. Change leadership to revitalize local economy!
5. Give me my democratic rights and get rid of bureaucracy!

This incident drew the attention of city and village leaders. As a result, the township government decided to delay the election and city leaders personally went there to criticize Cao and Liu. Two decisions were made: firstly, since Cao and Liu's behavior had sabotaged the election, they must write a self-criticizing report. Secondly, they must cover up their slogans with new slogans written on red paper. Cao and Liu were reluctant to comply initially, but accepted the decisions nonetheless.

5.5.6 Peasants Were Retaliated for Reporting Illegal Behavior in Financial Inspection—Non-institutional Participation Resulting from Retaliation Following Institutional Participation

Sometimes, in exercising their political rights, peasants may pose threats to the vested interests of village officials, thus retaliated. They then had no choice but to turn to the mandatory non-institutional political participation activities that could create a scene.

In early 1997, Mr. Wang and other peasant representatives from Chengqiao Village, Zhigang Town, Anhui Province, reported to the higher-level party committee and government that when checking the village finances, they found that their village officials illegally increased the burden on peasants and embezzled collective properties. Soon Wang was beaten up. For as long as two months, no one stepped in, which led to a mass petition to the provincial government.

In 1996, the CPC Committee and Government of Anhui Province decided to inspect the finances of villages within their authorities. People in Chengqiao Village were dissatisfied with the inspection group designated by village officials and elected a new one. During inspection, the group found many persisting problems with village officials: (i) A small number of village leaders forced peasants to reach extra targets of state purchased grain. For example, village party secretary Mr. Sun decided on his own that the village must sell at least another 7 % (over

10,000 kg of grain) beyond the state target every year, which means that at least an extra 100,000 kg of grain was sold in the past decade. The extra was used to meet the grain target of the family members of village officials or for other purposes; (ii) peasants were forced to pay for the endowment insurance of village officials and their families. From 1992 to 1995, 22,000 RMB was taken from the local people to buy endowment insurance for all village officials. Then, Sun and a few other officials used the money left to purchase endowment insurance for their families; and (iii) village officials collected arbitrary fees from peasants. The entries for fees collected for public services in the 1996 Record of Burdens on Peasant were unclear. Some were illegally charged not once, but sometimes twice. For example, peasants were not supposed to be charged for the village-run broadcast. But they not only paid to the town, but also paid an additional 51.2 RMB per head to the village. The charge of 87.5 RMB per peasant for voluntary services was also illegal.

According to the investigation of the inspection group, the average peasant was overcharged for 51.6 RMB in 1995 and, again, for 30 RMB in 1996. In these two years, the whole village paid at least an extra 240,000 RMB, of which 18,900 RMB could not be retrieved. The town officials refused to provide relevant financial statements on the overcharged fees. The inspection group required to disclose the investigation result, but was thwarted by town officials.

In the spring of 1996, the village planned to build a farmer's market. Sun turned down construction teams offering lower prices and instead, granted the project to his son-in-law and a Mr. Li, a businessman, without bidding. In return, Li gave Sun a cottage worth of 45,000 RMB.

However, Sun and others were holding a grudge against the inspection group for the investigation. On the night of January 28, 1997, Mr. Chen, Sun's cousin-in-law, went to Wang's home and tried to talk him out of the investigation. Their talk continued late into night and became a quarrel. Chen threatened Wang and said, "Keep investigating and you will regret it." The next day, when Wang came to Sun about the quarrel last night, Sun's son suddenly started punching Wang in the face until he was covered with blood. Later, the county hospital diagnosed that he had "a nasal fracture with irrecoverable deviation of his nose to the right and difficulty in breathing."

On the day when Wang was attacked, Chengqiao Village happened to be having its fair. Many people witnessed this incident and became discontent. They took Wang to the town government and demanded that officials must deal with the issue. But no one responded. For the following two months, Wang approached several important town leaders multiple times for justice, but the town government kept postponing the decision. Some officials even told him, "It won't be in your favor. Just suck it up."

Wang was a party member and was elected to the inspection group by the whole village. The peasants of Chengqiao Village were outraged to see that he fought for their interests but was beaten up and justice was not done. On March 28, nearly a hundred peasants went to the provincial government by tricycle to

petition. They caused traffic congestion, which created a huge stir. In early April, urged by the county government, the court finally accepted this case.

The officials of the CPC Committee of Anhui Province paid much attention to this case and required local authorities to solve this case as soon as possible. However, by April 14, half a month after the petition, Sun was still the village party secretary and Wang still was not compensated for his medial bill.

5.5.7 The Manipulated Non-institutional Participation of Peasants

Peasants are easy to mobilize, even when they do not have to know how their interests are involved. Therefore, influential individuals may take advantage of this and encourage peasants to participate in and influence ongoing political processes in an unconventional way for their own agenda. This may also be in line with the peasants' interests, but most of the time, it is not the case.

From December 1996 to March 1997, peasants from Hebei Dabai Village of Yunshan Town, Shandong Province, repeatedly bypassed local government to petition in groups to higher authorities. They first created a scene outside the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee. Later, they attempted to go to Beijing to petition to the central government after Deng Xiaoping's death in 1997 and during that year's National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, but were stopped on their way. This whole train of events reverberated throughout Shandong Province and was later known as the "Dabai Incident." In response, the CPC Municipal Committee carried out a field investigation to maintain social stability. As the investigation proceeded, it became apparent that the incident was just a lame show directed by Mr. Wang, former village party branch secretary. He attempted to cover up his criminal acts such as corruption and bribery and to resume power and replace the current village leadership.

On December 29, 1996, 52 petitioners from Hebei Dabai Village gathered in front of the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee in the city of Jinan during rush hours in the morning. They were crying out loud. Some were even in mourning clothes. They declared 18 wrongdoings of Mr. Liu, the current village party branch secretary, and refused to leave unless he was dismissed. The CPC Municipal Committee immediately sent people to Jinan to bring them back. Meanwhile, a joint investigation team, consisting of members from the Municipal Discipline Inspection Commission, the Procuratorate, the Bureau for Letters and Calls, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, and the Municipal Audit Bureau, was set up and headed to the village. Liu was dismissed for his brutal way of governing the village and replaced by the deputy minister of Yunshan Town's Armed Forces Department.

However, while investigation was continuing, on February 26, 1997, the next day of Deng Xiaoping's memorial service, 22 petitioners rented a coach to go

to Beijing to petition. On March 3, another 29 people left for Beijing. But all of them were stopped when they reached Weifang City, Shandong Province. Some were clamoring that they would keep up the drama and never give up petitioning to higher authorities. They said, "We will take the case to Qingdao and make the county authorities nervous. We will take the case to provincial authorities and make the municipal committee nervous. We will take the case to the central government and make you all nervous." They threatened to keep petitioning unless their demands for changing all the incumbent village officials and holding an election were met. At that time, the situation in Hebei Dabai Village seemed like a bomb that could go off at any minute.

The repeated and escalating group petitions made the leaders in CPC Qingdao Municipal Committee feel suspicious. On March 3, 1997, they convened an emergency meeting with members from the Qingdao Municipal Discipline Inspection Commission and the Qingdao Procuratorate to work on countermeasures. They believed that it was people's right to petition and it should be respected and supported. But in this case, the repeated petition to higher authorities in groups called for speculation whether the petitioners were manipulated by someone else. They decided to figure out the petitioners' backgrounds and motivation before taking further action.

The investigation team finally discovered two important clues through thorough investigation: (i) In 1991, a villager, surnamed Wang, bribed the former secretary of the village party branch, also surnamed Wang, with 1600 RMB to purchase a chain tracked vehicle in the village at a lower price and (ii) at the end of 1996, in order to deal with the complaints about the corruption of predecessors in the CPC committee and village committee, the then secretary of the village party branch Liu decided to ask officials from the Rural Economic Administration Station of Yunshan Town to check the committee accounts. Right at this time, the group petition happened. The team members investigated all 18 complaints and found that though Liu had problems with rudeness, the petitioners exaggerated the fact. They suspected that the group petition was very likely plotted by the former secretary Wang to cover up his corruption by utilizing villagers' grievances against Liu.

The findings proved the suspicion of the CPC Qingdao Municipal Committee leaders. They withdrew the investigators and sent disciplinary inspectors and supervisors to investigate the corruption of Wang and other officials.

They immediately made great progress. On that very day, psychologically shaken by the offensive by the officials of the Qingdao Municipal Discipline Inspection Commission, Wang admitted his several takings of Yu's bribery, which facilitated the following investigation.

They continued to find that Yu, the leader of orchard production team, in his own account, had both paid bribes to the former director of the village committee Yu and the former accountant of the village committee Wang. Following this lead and line of questioning about his source of bribes, Yu finally admitted he had pocketed 27,300 RMB from the sales of apples.

After Yu's confession, the investigative officials discovered that the former director Yu embezzled 4300 RMB and received a bribe of 5000 RMB; that the former accountant Wang embezzled 8600 RMB and reaped ill-gotten gains of 5000

RMB; that the leader of the orchid production team Yu swallowed 27,300 RMB from the apple sales, of which 15,300 RMB went into his own pocket; and that the cashier of the chemical plant in the village embezzled 13,800 RMB. With all the corrupt village officials being caught, the truth behind the "Dabai Incident" was finally revealed.

On July 17, 1997, the guilt of the former secretary Wang and his subordinates came into light at the meeting of the masses in Hebei Dabai Village.

Since 1991, Wang often neglected his official duties and stayed out of the village in the name of negotiating businesses, leading to the collapse of his subordinates and CPC members. During his tenure, the village was in 3.2 million RMB of debt. The social order in the village was disrupted with frequent occurrences of street-fighting, stealing, gambling, and arson. After Wang was removed from office, he and his son together with his subordinates plotted the group petition to cover his corruption and to further overturn the current leadership in a "legal way." Wang was later sentenced to four years in prison for taking bribes. The former accountant Wang and the production team leader Yu and Liu were all sued by municipal Procuratorate.

The ending is comforting while thought-provoking.

Liu succeeded Wang in 1995 for the position of the CPC Secretary of Hebei Dabai Village. After taking office, he resolved a number of his predecessors' legacy problems and won the villagers' support. However, due to his rude work style of abusing or bullying others, and even the illegal possession and abuse of police equipment, he gradually became alienated from the villagers. This opened the opportunity for his rivals to scheme against him by taking advantage of the villagers' awareness of political participation and thus harmed the village's stability and agricultural production.

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Chapter 6
Peasants' Interests in Political Participation and the Relationship Between Authority and Participation

An analysis of the non-institutional participation of peasants shows that political participation of the general public could provide an important approach to better resolving the social, economic, and political conflicts arising from the modernization process. During the transformation period, encouraging the orderly participation in political affairs does contribute to the settlement of conflicts and problems. However, this may sometimes lead to an opposite extreme. In fact, public political participation plays a limited role in resolving the conflicts. There are many approaches and tools for resolving social, economic, and political conflicts, as many factors affect these conflicts. An analysis of the two forms of non-institutional participation—induced participation and mandatory participation—indicates that a high level of unity exists between the two well-known statements made, respectively, by the first generation and the third generation of the CPC leadership, the former being "The fundamental issue is to educate rural citizens," and the latter being "The major issue is to educate government cadres."

Political participation may somehow put citizens and the government into a conflicting yet complementary position with each other. When the political system appears to be highly institutionalized, political participation tends to be cooperative, rational, and legitimate. However, during the transformation period, a certain degree of confrontation was often found in political participation between the general public and the government. The peaceful settlement of such confrontation depends on the degree to which the political system is institutionalized. A system characterized by a low degree of institutionalization will escalate the confrontation into violent conflicts and bring about social revolutions, thus undermining the political system itself.

Political participation, as a type of political action, is often engaged in three fundamental social relationships: exchange, authority, and persuasion. In other words, any kind of political participation can be fitted into the above three relationships.

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In regard to the issue of political participation of peasants during the social transformation period, attention must be paid not only to the balance of its interests in the exchange relationship, but also to its reasonable use of authority in the authority relationship, and its roles in ideology and institutions in the persuasion relationship. Political participation is a process of mutual control of the participating subjects and objects over each other, while exchange, authority, and persuasion are three fundamental tools for social control.

6.1 Balance of Interests and Political Participation

Based on mutual benefits, political participation always emphasizes on balancing different interests, thus making it a political-development model in which productivity can be better achieved.

6.1.1 Balance of Interests

The balance of interests in the exchange relationship of political participation can be further explained by the reciprocal relationship between citizens and the government under the principles of equality, voluntary, and consensus.

Political participation is any kind of action of an individual or a collective/group of individuals that intentionally or unintentionally, driven by one's own interests, gets involved in political relationships and takes part in political activities. All political relationships concerning individuals, collectives, interest groups, governments, political parties, and organizations can be fitted into the following three categories: the authority relationship, the exchange relationship, and the persuasion relationship. Therefore, authority, exchange, and persuasion are also the three elementary mechanisms for mutual control in political relationships. The mechanism of exchange, which always emphasizes the balancing of different interests, is the most basic tool and the most efficient method for social control. It contains three aspects: non-personal institutional requirements, personal institutional requirements, and enforced termination of the exchanges. Exchanges are quite common in society, while efficient exchanges require an efficient set of prices. The price that reflects people's preferences is called the efficient price, and the price that frustrates this process is called the arbitrary price. An efficient price is efficient for both parties of the deal. It is also called a "scarcity price," which corresponds to mutual appraisal of relative scarcities. There are three criteria for efficient pricing, which are equality, voluntariness, and consensus. First, the efficient price is the price that would be established if sellers and buyers became so numerous that no single buyer or seller could manipulate the price. Second, the efficient price will correctly inform buyers and sellers of the cost (the foregone alternatives) at which goods and services can in fact be provided if people are free

to make such offers as they wish. Last but not least, the efficient price shall be such as to clear the market in a non-monopolistic way, since the sellers' and the buyers' interests are constantly interwoven in the exchanges. How much property one can gain and how one can protect his/her private property in the exchanges are, to a great extent, dependent on what one has and what one can offer.

6.1.2 Peasants' Political Participation in the Exchange Relationship

Interest-driven peasants engage in political participation to settle their own problems or community problems. The political participation of peasants is, to a large extent, to facilitate such exchanges. In the simplest exchange relationships, peasants act as individuals only for personal interests. For example, they would be given a few benefits in exchange for their participation in politics through personal contact. In relatively complex exchange relationships, a variety of benefits are constantly given to peasants for their long-term and active participations in political activities. Such exchanges are caused by the corruption, monopolies, and the imperfections of the society in which peasants live. They are eager for some concessions which could help resolve their social and economic problems.

It is obvious that political groups organize peasants for clearer goals than peasants do themselves. Political organizations may give peasants benefits continuously for their long-term and active participation. The degree to which peasants are involved in political affairs depends on how much the potential benefits might drive them. In other words, peasants decide on the level of their involvement in political activities based on the benefits they can obtain from these political organizations. Such exchange is very practical, where the level of support organizers can win from peasants depends on the type, the significance, and the scarcity of the given interests. These organizers might be either reformers or conservatives who attempt to control the peasants. The possible motive of the conservatives might be political power. In contrast, the reformers strive for equality, requiring the reallocation of wealth and power. In other words, both organizers and peasants are involved in this exchange relationship for something. These exchanges are in line with the efficient prices.

In the three types of exchange relationships, the political participation of peasants is fundamentally driven by interests and the expected rewards: firstly, to settle economic and social problems; and, secondly, to improve their social status. These interests bring peasants various incentives, including social and material rewards, as well as numerous restrictions, such as material, social penalties, and other unavoidable restrictions. However, peasants choose to abide by the new institutions and become involved in the new social exchanges at the risk of losing the minimum benefits they may gain in the old exchange relationship (that is a sense of security and safeguarding public order), because they think the new exchange relationship does work and works efficiently.

6.1.3 Chinese Peasants' Political Participation in the Exchange Relationship

In the early to mid-1920s, the political participation of Chinese peasants took on a new from, from being unpredictable and unorganized to organized. Peasants emerged as a decisive political force. The major reason for this change was that when peasants' political participation reached its peak, organizers noticed a noteworthy type of interest in the exchange relationship. During the following periods, especially during the revolution and construction periods, organizers always paid close attention to and timely adjusted the types of interests from Chinese peasants' political participation.[1]

This brought effective exchanges and sound development during the respective revolution and construction periods. It has also proved true that such revolution and constructions periods would suffer setbacks when the adjustment of interests was neglected. This could be exemplified by the so-called unruly peasants' phenomenon emerging as a form of peasants' political participation since the 1990s.[2] Chinese peasants' political participation is interest driven. Political participation always exists within the contours of the exchange relationship. As a Western political scholar expounded, the Communist Party of China, "in a form of social exchange that selectively offers interest and imposes sanctions, has established a complete institutional network that can respond to the previous microeconomy reform among Chinese peasants and rely on the masses to complete complicated social work."[3]

6.1.4 The Level of Chinese Peasants' Political Participation

As a means of control, exchange is reflected through non-personal and personal impositions, in which imposition is reflected through the terminated exchange, and the potential for imposition. Non-personal imposition refers to those eligible citizens in a certain social system who must participate in politics. Specifically, that is, people in the political system must participate in politics. Personal imposition occurs when non-personal imposition does not work. Specifically, when people's interests suffer severe damage or the balance of interests in the exchange

[1]Discussions of the different types of interest groups can be found in the following articles: "Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (early and mid-1920s); "Mind the Living Conditions of the Masses and Attend to the Methods of Work" (mid-1930s); "On Policy" (early 1940s); "Turning Point in China" (late 1940s); "Ten Major Relationships" (mid-1950s); "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" (mid-1950s); "On Rural Policy" (early 1980s), etc.

[2]"Don't Treat the Mass as Unruly Citizens", *Qiushi*, 1996 (14).

[3]Migdal (1996).

relationship is broken. The "level of peasants' political participation" that we are going to analyze belongs to this kind of imposition. Imposition through termination of the exchange refers to a form of political participation of the people in the exchange relationship that is not always based on balanced interests. A change of time, conditions, environment, and contexts can cause a change of individual advantages for some political participators and upset the balance of interests. These participators have to pay a certain price for the interests of political organizers; that is, their rights and interests may be deprived by political organizers through terminating the exchange relationship. Clearly, to maintain social and political institutions, the harm caused by terminating the exchange relationship should be accepted. That means some people must be selected to pay the price for maintaining social and political institutions and promoting economic growth. Potential imposition means that when participators can choose from various things offered to them—these things have very little difference in value, or even as if they have not been exchanged—exchange is the best way of supporting freedom.[4]

When the balance of their interests in the political participation is upset, peasants will definitely make an effort at different levels to make up for a loss of interests. The level of the pursuit of interest reflects the types of peasants' political participation. In fact, peasants' political participation without political organization always needs to meet the requirements of the political institution. If possible, peasants will be obedient to their detriment rather than take the initiative to impact or to control social institution for their own interest. At any stage of societal development in the twentieth century, most Chinese peasants were always in such a passive political position, presenting as an obvious subordinate nature. Once attached to organizations and interests, peasants' political participation in the exchange relationship will fall into different levels and involve different types of political organizational participation or institutional participation. Moreover, the form and degree of the peasants' political participation varies by level. Based on the relationship between interest types and political participation, the peasants' political participation can be divided into three levels:

(i) Political participation for individual material and social interests. This level of peasants' political participation is closely related to the peasants' economic interests. However, such interests usually cannot be obtained due to corruption and monopoly of the society and the incomplete structure of the market system. Here, we suppose that the peasants' political participation is initially out of economic interests. The peasants' effective initial participation in political organizations is limited in terms of intensity, frequency, and scope and is commensurate with the peasants' individual interests. Whether peasants participate where no individual interests are obtained yet where greater goals might be achieved depends on their actual experience in the political organizations in which they achieve these goals.

[4]Lindblom (1994, 65).

(ii) Political participation for the interests of the whole rural community or some special social groups within the rural community. The peasants' political participation at this level is for the interests of groups (slightly larger than a family) and relatively smaller than other social groups (including other peasant groups). Here the interests of peasants refer to collective interests, but remain highly selective. For instance, in order to win peasants' support, organizers may help the village to build a road. As the road construction is collective work, each peasant may expect to do less than others but still benefit from the collective actions. However, peasants can gain individual interests if their performance is of the same quality as others, which will reinforce their confidence in achieving greater goals. Past instances of cooperation with others in organizations also convince peasants on a deeper level that others could perform well in achieving greater objectives.
(iii) Peasants participate in politics to seek the interests of the whole class, that is, to realize class mobility in relation to other social classes. It is the highest level of participation, aiming to realize the most complex social goal that entails a wide-range redistribution of a state's political and economic power. With their short-term goals realized repeatedly, and their collective interests in rural areas increasingly expanded, peasants will gradually clear their concerns about political organs and begin to support the ideology and action programs of these organs. Against this backdrop, they are willing to take part in effective political actions that can help reach the ultimate goals, and to participate in actions that are rarely or indirectly related to their individual interests or the local interests at all costs. In fact, this can only be realized when a large majority of peasants are united by some kind of organization instead of being split into individuals competing with each other for scarce resources.

The suppression from the Kuomintang in the 1920s impelled the CPC to build its own armed forces to protect its supporters and party members. From the 1930s to early 1940s, the CPC was able to take advantages of the political collapse caused by the aggressive war Japan waged against China. The massive "mopping-up" operation launched by Japanese army and the resistance from the people in fallen areas led to serious social disorders in China, which was further intensified by the escape of the upper class in traditional rural areas and the high officials of the Kuomintang. In some areas, by providing more protection and attracting them to participate in revolutions with material benefits, the CPC was able to get peasants out of social turbulences caused by war. This was initially reflected as the ability to help peasants harvest grains at the outset. The strengthening of its capacity to organize the revolution further enabled itself to not only help peasants get out of social disorders, but also build the relationship of social exchange that can be used to deal with social deficiencies from which peasants had suffered before the breakout of the war. Under the CPC leadership, the peasants, acting as one unified social class, formed the main entity in there form against the existing political institution. This social class with standardized hierarchy and clear political goals laid a solid foundation for the nationwide victory of CPC. Through the exchange

relationship between the CPC and the peasants, the CPC established its political authority that finally led to a unified governmental authority.

6.2 Reasonable Use of the Authority Relationship and Political Participation

The reasonable use of the authority in political participation is very important in establishing the citizen–government cooperation and coordinated development, and in developing the productive political relationship. During the social transformation period, abuse of authority was prominent in the political participation of peasants, usually causing mandatory non-institutional participation.

6.2.1 Peasants' Political Participation in the Authority Relationship

Peasants who play a subordinate role in the authority relationship know clearly the rules of political participation. In formal organizations such as churches, clubs, fellowship societies, companies, and labor unions, the authority relationship marks the identities of their members. If a person admits that he or she is a member of one of these organizations, he or she is actually expressing the recognition of the leaders' authority in or their authority in controlling the organization. Order and obedience constitute the essence of an authority relationship, which often comes into play with the support of laws and other conventional rules. This kind of relationship can be regarded as an effective social control approach, for it can be used easily in a legal manner. In the authority relationship, submissive people know what to do or not to do even without having received any order. New authority relationships can be derived from existing ones or developed in the exchange process.

In the authority relationship, the rules for the political participation of peasants include complying with the order and obeying the authority, abiding by laws and regulations, and acting in a proper and recognized way. When the political participation of peasants does not conform to or even violates the rules, it will seriously threaten the political stability or even damage the political institutions and structure. This is called non-institutional participation, which fails to comply with laws and appropriate procedures or even breaks the laws and regulations. When the political participation of peasants conforms to the rules, cooperation will be established among peasants, between peasants and officials and between peasants and the government, to realize political harmony and mutual benefits. This is called institutional participation, meaning that peasants take part in political activities in a legal, orderly and proper manner.

6.2.2 Types of Peasants' Institutional Non-institutional Participation During the Social Transformation

There are currently two kinds of political participation of peasants in China: institutional participation and non-institutional participation. The latter is becoming more prominent. The types of institutional participation include: (i) Peasants take an effective part in political activities under laws and regulations, such as direct elections and referendum in rural areas. According to Chinese laws, peasants' rights to vote are protected, and they can directly elect village officials, deputies to the county or town/township people's congress and villagers' representatives. After the *Administrative Procedure Law* was promulgated, some peasants initiated administrative litigation against the state administrative organs and government departments which infringed their rights; (ii) The individual peasant or peasant groups formally or informally provide information or give advice or criticism to officials or relevant organs in a legal and proper way, in hope of changing officials' working methods or influencing the decision process or even changing decisions made; (iii) Peasants express their views, protect their own rights, or influence the decision process through news media. For example, they can complain to news media about arbitrary charges and levies, issuing illegitimate promissory notes, the default in providing fertilizers subsidies and the violation of laws and regulations by officials. The institutional participation helps peasants become more mature in participating in political matters, leading to more scientific decisions about the issues of agriculture, peasants and rural areas and more reasonable ways in implementing policies in rural areas, and more importantly, providing many valuable experiences for China to develop democratic politics in rural areas.

We should pay close attention to the increasing prevalence of non-institutional participation. It challenges the authority relationship. Unbalanced relationship will cause political unrest. We should be particularly wary of the destructive participation which is now typical of non-institutional participation, for example: (i) Peasants give bribes to law enforcement officials, village officials, or other higher-ranking officials for the purposes that are beyond their own capacities; (ii) Dissatisfied with the heavy burden or the improper working methods of officials, peasants launch protests or violent rebellions; (iii) "Evil forces" in rural areas become increasingly rampant, mainly reflected in the following aspects. First, clans' spreading power and illegal interference with political issues—besides extending lineage activities, the clans even set up illegal organizations to interfere with village administration, replacing village regulations with their clan rules while clan leaders take the role of village head. As a result, clan power has overtopped the village authorities. Clansmen are instigated to cause violence in village and even beat the officials. They not only refuse to pay agricultural tax or village's legitimate reserve, but also ignore the state's one-child policy. Some of them even defy the grassroots authorities, blatantly in contempt by the Party and government. Second, resurgence of illegal religious organizations including heretical cults and secret societies (such as the Huidaomen society)–in some areas, illegal

and secret religious forces go unrestrained due to the administration's inefficiency in religious management. The considerable increase of cultists as well as their unscrupulous behaviors has threatened citizens' freedom not to believe in religions. Besides, intervention and penetration from foreign religious forces also fuel the activities of illegal religious organizations. Some cults like the Shouters sect (HuhanPai) spread the doomsday rumors and rave about seizing political power. Some of the suppressed secret societies become active again, expanding their targets from the general public to CPC members and government officials. For example, the Disciples sect (Mentuhuisociety) dispersed heretical ideas and deceived people to engage in illicit or criminal activities, jeopardizing the political power in rural areas. Third, the rampage of gangs and hooligans—some gangs organize large-scale violence to smash township government, invoke fights in the name of fighting for water, roads, and markets, and cut off water and electricity, bringing severe damage to the local economy. Furthermore, some village officials connive with hooligans at drug trafficking and addiction. Frequent gang-up, gang fights, robbing, and homicides committed by burglary and gambling gangs destroy the local security and social climate. The lingering "evil forces" have become a tumor endangering rural stability and grassroots political power.

6.2.3 Principles for Institutional Development in Rural Areas

Utilizing initiatives of participating objects is of great importance to political participation in the authority relationship during the transformation period. This is achieved in the process of strengthening the institution. In the transformation period, institutions in rural area need further strengthening with the following requirements and goals: (i) The guidelines of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the principles of democracy, transparency, and rule of law should be followed in the pursuit of rural economy development and stability; (ii) Institutional development at village level should be the main focus. It is needed to restrain village officials' improper behaviors, and carry out election, policy-making, management, and supervision in a democratic way. Hence, a rural institutional system that is both effective and comprehensive can be established, villagers' rights to make decisions and be informed of village affairs can be ensured, and self-management, self-education, self-discipline, and self-service by village officials and peasants can be achieved, forming a legitimate and normalized system of self-governance by villagers, public disclosure of village affairs, and democratic management.

There are four principles for institutional development in rural areas: (i) Legality—All institutions shall comply with the state laws and regulations as well as the CPC's guidelines and policies. Indigenous policies that violate laws are strictly prohibited; (ii) Public participation—The public should be involved in establishing institutions, with their advice sufficiently consulted. Peasants should

become the "first drafter" of regulations and institutions should gather peasants' intellects to truly reflect their opinions and claims, and protect their rights and interests; (iii) Practicability—Institutions need to be effective and practical. It is important to enhance their pertinence and feasibility as much as possible and avoid indiscriminate imitation. They should also be accepted and observed by the general public; (iv) Systematicness—The institutions should be a well-organized system, avoiding overlapping or redundant operations. They should set up working, management, supervision, assessment, and incentive mechanism from within, and ensured effective implementation.

6.2.4 Exerting the Initiative of the Party and Government

When applying the four principles of legality, public participation, practicability, and systematicness to facilitate institutional development in rural areas and keep village administration on track, the initiative of the Party and government should be fully exerted.

Firstly, the importance and necessity of institutional development in rural areas during the transformation period should be fully recognized. It is an objective requirement for fully and faithfully implementing the governing Party's routes, guidelines and policies, and the state laws and regulations in rural areas; an effective way to practice the governing the Party's "mass perspective" and "Mass Line" in grass roots; and also fundamental guarantee for rural stability, the CPC's and government's close ties with the public, and rapid development of rural economy and democracy. With the goal to set up rules for village administration, institutional development is critical for rural areas during the transformation period.

Secondly, priorities should be made in institutional development. That is to say, villagers' participation in discussion and policy-making, public disclosure of village affairs, financial management, and self-governance by villagers should become the key tasks. Emphasis also needs to be put on the level of village while sticking to mutual development at the levels of township and village. In addition, the two-way constraint between village officials and peasants should be insisted, with stricter supervision on the former.

Thirdly, the method of combination should be upheld in the following aspects: (i) Democratic self-governance and leadership should be combined. For one thing, democracy should be promoted in improving self-governance by villagers, making them the masters of their village. For another, CPC committees at the township level and CPC branches at the village level should stick to their leadership in developing democracy, and guide villagers to manage, educate, and serve themselves in self-governance; (ii) Institutional restraint and ideological and political education should be combined. Institutional restraint is essential to the regulation of behavior, but it cannot solve all the problems. Ideological and political education should also be strengthened routinely to foster the conscious adherence of officials and the public to the institution. (iii) Efforts to build up systems and

develop economy should be combined together. The thinking that "development is of overriding importance" must be firmly kept in mind. The work of rural system building should serve the purpose of boosting economy, with attention paid to emancipating and developing rural productive forces, and to solving difficulties in developing rural economy and problems that concern the vital interests of the public. This will provide institutional insurance for promoting market economy in rural areas. (iv) The institutional and leading group construction must be combined together. A better leading group is a precondition for the establishment of a better institution, which in turn regulates behaviors of the leading group. Accordingly, a system for the democratic appraisal of government officials by CPC members and the general public must be established and improved to ensure that officials observe rules and regulations. This will intensify the public supervision over the leadership and facilitate the normalized institutional participation of peasants.

Fourthly, the leadership must be strengthened in the following ways: (i) The CPC committees and government bodies at all levels should focus on system building as an integral part of furthering the economic and political structural reforms in rural areas, so that village affairs are handled on a legal basis. Government officials should visit villages to offer direct assistance and guidance. In addition, the CPC committees and government bodies at town and township levels should fully perform their role through the application of a leadership responsibility system. They should give priority to the task of establishing and improving rural institutions, as well as regulating economic and social orders, and assume their due responsibility; (ii) Targeted guidance and successful models should be provided in the course of system building. First, guidance on system building must be tailored instead of one-size-fits-all to local conditions and people's concerns that vary across rural areas in China. In regard to villages with a strong leading group and a solid institutional foundation, the focus is on normalizing village-level governance by reinforcing, improving, and perfecting this foundation gradually; as for villages under a good leadership yet short of a sound institution, the right remedy is to accelerate institutional construction; for villages burdened with paralyzed leadership and less developed economy, the efforts to build a stronger leading group should be prioritized over the institutional construction. Moreover, attention must be paid to developing and learning from good models of system building, in an effort to gradually promote system building across rural areas; (iii) The CPC committees and government bodies at all levels should adopt a holistic approach to system building in rural areas, a complicated and systematic project that entails consistent policies. They should mobilize all concerning departments to cooperate together, with clear-cut tasks assigned to each department to avoid overlapping and redundant operations. (iv) The supervision and inspection must be intensified to ensure the effective and sustained implementation of rural institutions, which cannot be achieved without a sound supervision–inspection system and an incentive–restraint mechanism. Therefore, efforts should be made in the following aspects. First, the CPC committees and government bodies at township and county levels should give priority to the inspection

and supervision in this field, and all concerning departments should monitor the process of implementation at community level. Second, it is necessary to advocate public supervision. The supervisory function of Villagers' Representative Council will be fulfilled by establishing the democratic appraisal system of village administrators. Finally, news media supervision should also be promoted. All the abovementioned methods should be combined with an incentive–restraint mechanism. The assessment will motivate village administrators to improve their performance if the results are directly linked to their salary, rewards, and punishment.

Fifthly, attention should be paid to establishing balanced relationships between: (i) three undertakings—strengthening the CPC leadership, fully exercising democracy, and promoting law-based administration; (ii) formulating rules and regulations, choosing dedicated people for official positions, and providing sufficient funds for administration; and (iii) implementation of the CPC guidelines and policies, and efforts to make village affairs public and exercise democratic management.

6.3 The Institutional Role of Ideology and Political Participation

Whether in the exchange relationship or the authority relationship, the institutional role of ideology must be emphasized and fulfilled in achieving a cohesive and cooperative citizen–government relationship through political participation.

6.3.1 Peasants' Political Participation in the Persuasion Relationship

The political participation of peasants through exchange or authority is connected with persuasion. Persuasion can be combined with both authority and exchange. Through controlling communications, persuasion can induce the passive obedience and active loyalty of a population, or draw positive response, hence easing conflicts and reaching consensus. Persuasion is a central and fundamental element of social control in all social systems. It has its place in both authority and exchange relationships. Persuasion is also a ubiquitous form of social control and is of special importance in the analysis of the political-economic system on three counts. In the form of ideological instruction and propaganda, persuasion is a major method of elite control of masses. In the form of "free competition of ideas," or in the form of mutual persuasion, it is fundamental to liberal democracy. The persuasion relationship is a two-way interaction rather than a one-sided control in political participation. In the persuasion relationship based on the exchange relationship, peasants try to maintain and express their interests through

persuasion, while the organizers, the object of political participation, try to organize the peasants through persuasion as a powerful means to acquire more resources (e.g., in political, economic, social, and cultural forms) and guide the peasants to become their powerful political force; when persuasion is combined within the authority relationship, peasants try to show their respect to authority through persuasion, whereas the organizers attempt to win more confidence and cooperation from the peasants to maintain and strengthen their authority.

In his analysis of the persuasion and authority relationships, Charles Edward Lindblom noted, "Not the gun but the word is the symbol of authority. The most frequent government activities are talking, writing, listening, and reading. Persons in authority find themselves barraged with persuasive communications—fact, analysis, entreaty, exhortation, and lies—and they reply in kind." They can also hunger for information. For instance, an official who has to be in charge of monetary policy must rely on people who can explain to him the complexity of money and credit movement. In this never-ending talking, persuasion completes a major part of the mutual adjustment of authorities. Even when influences are not pursued on purpose, facts, analysis, concepts, and wrong information also produce effects, only because people always respond to experiences of the world around them. Some political scientists even hold the view that democracy is simply policies based on persuasion (The authority relationship is the bedrock on which government is established). The organizers, who are the participating objects in the peasants' political participation in the persuasion relationship, are always in a dominant position. Persuasion, the way in which peasants participate in politics, mostly comprises the mobilization, discipline, and education of the participating objects.

6.3.2 The Institutional Role of Ideology

The most important institutional arrangement that exists to reduce the costs of providing the services of other institutional arrangements is ideology.[5] Its fundamental institutional functions are cohesion and cooperation.

Ideology plays an irreplaceable role in influencing people's decision-making, resource distribution, and economic performance among all institutional variables. It is an economizing device that can help simplify decision-making process. In this sense, sound moral values and ethical standards of a society are the linchpin of social stability and vibrant economy. Ideologies are intellectual efforts to rationalize the behavioral pattern of individuals and groups. Simply put, ideologies are theories of how the world works. It is one of the two basic elements for the interpretation of institutional changes, the other being political structure. Ideologies are ubiquitous shared theories of the world. An ideology is an

[5]Fang (1997).

economizing device by which individuals come to terms with their environment. Its key function is to legitimate the existing institutional structure or solidify a group. An ideology is human capital that helps an individual make a moral judgment about his or others' role in the division of labor, the distribution of income, and the existing institutional structure of a society. According to an analysis model of institutional change, a set of ideologies, which facilitate successful institutional changes and maintain economic growth, must contain a comprehensive view of the world and be flexible enough to interpret the observable external changes. Comprehensiveness and flexibility are the two preconditions for ideologies to function as an institutional role.

Ideologies have three essential features. Firstly, an ideology is an economizing device by which individuals come to terms with their environment and are provided with a "worldview" so that the decision-making process is simplified. Secondly, ideology is inextricably interwoven with moral and ethical judgments about the fairness of the world the individual perceives. This situation clearly implies a notion of possible alternatives—competing rationalizations or ideologies. A normative judgment of the "proper" distribution of income is an important part of an ideology. Thirdly, individuals alter their ideological perspectives when their experiences are inconsistent with their ideology. In effect, they attempt to develop a new set of rationalizations that better "fit" their experiences. However, it is important to stress that the inconsistencies between experience and ideologies must accumulate before individuals alter their ideology. A single anomaly seldom changes individual ideological perspectives. Only a series of changes that run counter to people's perceived legitimacy or greatly influence the consequences of their benefits may make people alter their ideologies.

Different ideologies originate from different geographic locations and occupational specializations. Originally, it was the geographic location that confronted bands with the experiences which coalesced into languages, customs, taboos, myths, religions, and eventually ideologies differing from those of other bands. These survive today in the ethnic diversity that produces conflicting ideologies. Occupational specialization and division of labor also lead to diverse experiences and differing and conflicting perspectives about reality. Marx made "consciousness" dependent upon one's position in the production process and this insight was an important contribution in explaining the development of "class consciousness."

What is a successful ideology? Firstly, it must be interpretive and flexible. Consisting of coherent and comprehensive views of the world, an ideology has its main function in legitimating the existing institutional structure or solidifying a group. A society or group cannot exist for long if the majority of its members do not share the same feeling about the justice of the system. In a society where the differences in ideology between different classes are deep enough, revolution will follow. Secondly, it must overcome the free-rider problem, as a society or an organization is formed to exploit the gains that an individual is unable to capture; however, the rationality assumption of individual behavior also implies that any large organization is inherently beset by free-rider problems. Therefore, the fundamental aim of a successful ideology is to energize groups to behave contrary to

a simple, hedonic, and individual calculus of costs and benefits. This is the central thrust of major ideologies, since neither the maintenance of the existing social order nor its overthrow is possible without such behavior. Thirdly, since an ideology is an economizing device for the recognition of the world, an effective ideology must conform reasonably to an individual's experience of the world. As the world changes and individuals' experiences accumulate, their perceptions of a fair world also change. A successful ideology must also be flexible enough to capture the loyalty of new groups or retain the loyalty of older groups as external conditions change. Loyalty is the core of an ideology. Fourthly, the dominant ideology attempts to make people believe that justice is as permanent as the existing regulations, and thus morally obey these regulations. However, a successful counter ideology aims to convince people that the obvious injustice is an integral part of existing systems, and justice will be established only when individuals take an active part in transformation. A successful counter ideology should not only provide a convincing image of the link between the specific injustices perceived by various groups and the larger system which the intellectual entrepreneurs desire altered, but also offer a Utopia free of these injustices and provide a guide to action, so that individuals can take proper actions to realize it.

An ideology is a coherent belief system based on "loyalty," aiming to overcome the free-rider problem. It has the following functions:

Firstly, an ideology contains a basic element of voluntary obedience, which helps maintain the solidarity and stability within a group. Any ideology only exists within a specific group and is shared by its members, contributing to the unity in both their perceptions and actions and encouraging high efficiency and harmony.

Secondly, an ideology demonstrates the rationality of collective actions, which helps strengthen the cooperation within the group. Such demonstration may further reduce resistance and opposition from other groups, and win social recognition and support to the most.

Thirdly, an ideology motivates all members to take collective actions. It works in two aspects. On the one hand, members are inspired to achieve goals with confidence, passion, and determination, which transform people's work incentive from "economic incentives" to self-actualization. On the other hand, long-term goals become more attractive to members to the point that members are willing to sacrifice their short-term interests to show support. This function is typically realized through a few outstanding members and leaders. By taking advantage of internal mechanisms, such as communication and demonstration, they encourage group members to take collective actions.

Fourthly, an ideology restrains behaviors of group members to address the free-rider problem. However, ideology acts as an informal constraint on one's thoughts and morality. It is a kind of "soft constraints" without institutional guarantees of enforcement and supervision. The success of this function depends on the individual recognition of group goals and the balance between individual and group cost-benefit. Therefore, this function is unstable.

Fifthly, an ideology regulates group relations. There are different interest groups in the society. They may cooperate with each other or oppose against each

other. Different interests lead to different ideologies, which further influences relationships between groups. The structures and relations of these interest groups, influenced by group ideologies, eventually determine the economic performance. In general, weaker interest groups lead to better economy. However, this function is not decisive. The ideology only serves as an idea to react to the physical world.

6.3.3 Participating Objects of Rural Politics to Learn Persuasion

China endowed "persuasion" with a distinct role in the political system in the Mao era. In regard to the political participation of peasants, the CPC effectively applied the means of exchange, authority, and persuasion and attached great importance to persuasion. As a result, peasants are organized in the revolution and construction and achieved great success, motivated to further participate in politics. Persuasion was proved effective and successful in all political relationships throughout the Mao era.

After the Mao era, some political participating objects, namely organizers, neglected the institutional role of ideology and the necessity to improve communication methods in response to the changing time, conditions, and environment. As a result, the function of persuasion for cohesion and cooperation in political life was weakened. Some organizers even deny the function of persuasion, simply imposing the authority relationship on peasants involved in the political participation. The following ten points are concluded as the moral and ethical defects of the participating peasants excluded from the persuasion relationship: narrow mindedness; egoism; money worship; superstition; barbarism; extravagance; rage; spiritual emptiness and changeable beliefs; anarchism; distorted ethics; and morality. These problems have terribly hindered the cultural and ideological development, social stability, and democratic politics in rural areas. So "the fundamental issue is to educate peasants." However, without balanced interests and effective persuasion, authority cannot gather up any power and will collapse in the end. Therefore, it is urgent to promote effective persuasion in the political participation of peasants.

6.3.4 Promoting Ideological and Ethical Progress During the Transformation Period

During the transformation period, ideological and ethical development in rural areas has undergone continuous improvement to adapt to the market economy and meet the demands of rural progress in all walks of life.[6] The mindsets and morale

[6]EXuanwen (1995).

of peasants have experienced remarkable changes, and ideological and ethical progress has propelled rural economic growth and social development. However, ideological and ethical development in rural areas still has a long way to go and has encountered many problems in the mindsets of peasants and the practice of promoting ideological and ethical progress.

First, the ideological and ethical mindsets of some peasants are still influenced by the ideas of natural economy, traditional planned economy, and the negative effects of market economy, thus unable to adapt to socialist market economy and meet the demands of rural development. They are best shown in the following three aspects: (i) Their tendency to think like small peasants and follow clan and patriarchal rules, together with feudal and superstitious beliefs, is not compatible with the concepts of mass production, collectivism, and scientific outlooks. Some peasants who have become well-off are not thinking about how to expand production, or delve into new technologies. Instead, they are perfectly content with their existing achievements and are unwilling to make any further progress. For instance, they are enthusiastic about holding extravagant banquets, filling out genealogy charts, renovating ancestors' graves, and engaging in superstitious activities; (ii) Their fear of competition and their reliance on government are in sharp contrast to the concepts of equal competition and independence; (iii) There exist incompatibilities between the socialist philosophy of life, along with its core values system, and the influence of adverse effects of market economy. It has been proved that market economy is a powerful driving force to improve peasants' ethics. However, market economy alone cannot automatically increase ethical level. Instead, its negative effects, together with the old perceptions of exploitative class, still affect the ideological development of peasants. Due to the prevailing exchange of goods for money, a small number of peasants begin to think that money is everything and thus everything they do is about money. As a result of differentiated interests, driven by profit, some people put too much emphasis on individual interests while giving up on their long-term goals, and overlooking national and collective interests. In the fierce competition, some people sell fake or poor-quality products for illegal profits.

Second, the ideological and ethical development in some rural areas cannot meet the demands of rural economic and ethical development, due to lack of awareness, weak leadership, and insufficient investment. In few areas, local officials have not realized the significance of "promoting economic and ethical development in a balanced manner," and thus do not give enough attention to the latter, which is demonstrated by the separation of market economy development from ideological guidance. Some officials believe that since their efforts have been mainly devoted to facilitating the development of market economy, they are unable to spare time and efforts on ideological guidance. Some hold that economic progress will automatically improve ideological mindsets. Thus, the most imperative task at present is to boost economic growth, and ethical improvement comes second. Others think that as long as yields of grain, cotton, and oil increase each year, so will their incomes; they will not lose their jobs. Such misconceptions have led to poor working performances in the following four aspects: (i) Some officials are

unwilling to play a proactive role in exploring innovative approaches to ideological and ethical guidance in market economy; and unable to implement guidelines, policies, and decisions with regard to promoting ethical development effectively; (ii) Some local governments lack investment and still use obsolete working methods, making it difficult to support ethical guidance; (iii) Existing officials are unable to meet the demands of ethical development. Ideological guidance in rural areas targets hundreds of thousands of rural households, which are scattered in different places, with increasing number of migrant workers leaving, high job mobility, and low educational attainment. In particular, there are some loosely organized village-level organizations, sometimes even dominated by village clans; (iv) Some cultural products providing ideological guidance are unable to satisfy the demands of peasants, or even have adverse impact on ethical development of peasants. Some peasants thus call for more freedom for them to focus on production.

Third, the external environment has been unfavorable to ideological and ethical progress in some areas due to limited reform and opening up, low economic growth, underdeveloped legal system, and improper administrative interventions. Thus, it does little to support the comprehensive development in rural areas. Problems with the mindsets of peasants are results of ineffective ideological and ethical guidance while leading causes are external factors in rural areas. According to peasants and grassroots officials, three main external factors impeded the progress of ideological guidance: (i) Sluggish growth of collective economy makes it difficult for the village government to address real problems of rural residents, thus diminishing the credibility of ethical instructions. As some rural residents put it, "the authority is unable to offer any support when we encounter difficulties, but we are obliged to obey any order it issues"; (ii) The existing incomplete legal framework and the lack of public security in particular in some rural areas make peasants feel less secure in their life. Some peasants commented, "If we go away from home, we fear being beaten up. If we stay at home, we fear thieves. If we do business, we fear being robbed. Even if we decide to go into fish farming, we fear that our fishes may be poisoned." (iii) Quite a few rural residents complain about the corruption of CPC members and improper management at grassroots level. In certain areas, the relationship between grassroots officials and rural residents is rather tense, which to some extent hampers the effectiveness of ethical guidance.

All the problems faced by ideological and ethical development in rural areas can be attributed to a single factor: Ideological guidance lags behind the development of socialist market economy. In order to address such problem, the most imperative issue on top of the agenda is to put emphasis on establishing the ethical and ideological system for peasants that supports comprehensive rural development, especially socialist market economy and responds to the shifting needs of peasants. The establishment of ethical system for peasants in the new era should be guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory and should meet the new demands of comprehensive rural development and the initial stage of socialism, especially the shifting needs during the transformation period of socialist market economy. It requires inheriting and borrowing best practices as well as innovation, to establish a system that reflects fundamental

socialist characteristics and the common socialism aspiration in China. Besides, it should be compatible with the existing level of productivity in rural areas and the current mindsets of peasants.

Shared pursuits, beliefs, and values should serve as the central force in propelling ideological and ethical progress in rural areas, to cultivate peasants to become ambitious, moral, educated, and disciplined. To be more specific, efforts should be made to help peasants adapt to the transition from traditional agriculture to modern agriculture, from planned economy to socialist market economy, which are crucial to increase their living standards. More work should be done in promoting personal ethics (pursuits, beliefs, and values), social ethics, professional codes, and family ethics, to encourage them to value patriotism, collectivism, diligence, and altruism, and to despise the worship of money and egoism. More work should be done in advocating honesty and equal competition, and rejecting opportunism and venality. More efforts are needed to promote atheism and science, and to fight against superstition and clan beliefs, so that peasants can keep up with the times and uphold patriotism, market ethics, cooperation, harmony, and science.

The following four relations must be taken into account in promoting ideological and ethical progress in rural areas during the transformation period:

The first is the relation between the long-term goal and interests of peasants. On the one hand, peasants should be guided to value the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and aspire to become literate, knowledgeable, ethical, and skillful. On the other hand, such guidance should be integrated into their daily economic activities with the utmost respect of their legitimate rights. Their important role in the market should not be neglected. Meanwhile, ethical codes and laws need to encourage peasants to create more profit and wealth in an ethical and legal way.

The second is the relation between the advanced peasants and ordinary peasants. These advanced peasants, including those who are CPC members, Communist Youth League members, or assume leadership roles, need to serve as role models. At the same time, the remaining three groups of peasants should be cultivated based on their unique features. For example, the group of people who were peasants, but later become workers in rural companies or rural entrepreneurs, should be encouraged to achieve further ideological and ethical progress by taking advantage of their quick learning abilities, open mindset, and pioneering spirit, because they have access to relatively advanced manufacturing methods and socialized mass production. In this sense, they show features of working-class people and are the representatives of China's advanced productive forces in rural areas. While the group of local peasants engaging in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery should be taught science and technology, and receive help to overcome their mentality as small peasants cultivated under the natural economy and backwards thinking such as feudalistic superstition. Their understanding of market economy, competition, efficiency, and science should be enhanced. The group of peasants seeking fortune elsewhere outside their village should be educated to further improve their social morality and professional ethics by raising their recognition of collectivism and the rule of law, to contribute to local material and spiritual civilization.

The third is the relation between educating peasants and encouraging self-learning. Appropriate ideological and ethical values are never automatically achieved, but are acquired later in life, which needs the society's inculcation. In this sense, every possible occasion and medium should be harnessed to effectively educate peasants in a way that appeals to them. In the meantime, great attention should be attached to peasants' self-education. Various approaches such as ethical review, following model roles, and awarding model families should be used to promote the self-education, self-cultivation, and self-improvement of peasants, especially when they have become better educated and more aware of this issue.

The fourth is the relation between the peasants' self-discipline and the constraints set by laws and regulations. To promote the ideological and ethical value of peasants under market economy requires sound laws to curb them from acting on impulse in pursuit of profits and materials. Law should be supplemented by ethical education. Therefore, peasants need to be given room for self-discipline and at the same time, disciplined by the authorities. Both are important in their ideological and ethical education. By disciplining peasants, it means in addition to encouraging compliance with general laws, and the rules, institutions and regulations of market economy, village regulations should be established based on the unique situation of local community to ensure lasting effect.

6.4 Cost Control and Political Participation

Government is in a dominant position in its tense relation with the peasants who participate in politics. To effectively ease this tension, government should consider carefully what methods and approaches could guide peasants to initiate standardized and systematic political participation. Therefore, as the object of peasants' political participation, government should consider the issue of cost and effect.

6.4.1 Cost Control

Cost control is needed in using the three basic methods of social control, i.e., exchange, using authority, and persuasion. Different people or organizations have different understanding of cost control and adopt different methods, thus with different results.

Controlling by exchange often requires people to give up something of value to get others do what they want them to do. In this process, every attempt of the controller carries high costs, as he has to offer something valuable in exchange for the desired response. The potential targets are never easy to control because they can think for themselves, just as what frequently happened in an authority-driven system. In that case, the marginal cost of social control falls to almost zero. In fact, we can see that in an authority-driven system, the authority will always

be maintained as long as it is executed. So, in some cases where no authority is executed, persuasion will be adopted to achieve social control, which will come at a huge price, in terms of the time and energy spent. Moreover, without enough knowledge and intelligence, without the techniques and coordination skills required, the result will not be desirable and will fail to generate active response. In contrast, the authority-enabled control often costs less since it facilitates coordination and people find it enjoyable to use. However, there is no denying that the authority is often established and maintained at a high cost, especially in governments where weapons, polices, armies, courts, and other special institutions that help to maintain the authority are needed. Control through authority, once established, is often costless. And the repeated exercise of authority often helps maintain the cost. Only in rare situations will exercising authority undermines itself, thus overturning the entire authority-driven system. The exercise of authority has no cost in special situations because authority is stable and long-lasting and can be used in a huge number of practices. It can be granted prior to its use and usually requires no compensation, punishment, control, or persuasion efforts to achieve a desired response. All that is needed is to indicate which response is desired by the authority. Of course it will take time to exercise the authority, but still the cost is low. However, people are usually deterred by the cost of establishing or choosing an authority and turn to persuasion or exchange which cost their own resources.

6.4.2 The Costs of Chinese Peasants' Political Participation

Peasants' political participation in China is controlled by means of authority, exchange, or persuasion. The organizers (governments, parties, or other formal organizations), as the objects in peasants' political participation, must take into consideration the costs of their interaction with peasants. Their goals will be difficult to achieve if only one method (authority, exchange, or persuasion) is adopted. In the political relationships related to political participation, authority is the foundation. Exchange is the basis and persuasion is central to all. If participants only pursue low costs and ignore the balance of interests, their attempt to achieve social control without spending any time or energy will lead to the overturn of the authority, which will be more costly since it is expensive to establish an authority. Based on this point, the exercise of authority is in fact "taking advantages of the past achievements."

If organizers only consider the balance of material benefits and ignore the effect of authority and persuasion, political participation will not be at a high level, and sociopolitical development will not be of high quality.

If organizers want to promote the sociopolitical development merely through persuasion and ignore the exercise of authority and the balance of interests, their efforts will often end in vain.

Effective cost control will ensure harmonious interaction between participants and objects in political activities during the exercising of authority, exchange, and

persuasion, thus ensuring a stable sociopolitical structure, improved sociopolitical system, and its further development.

In many cases of today's peasants' political participation in China, only authority was used, with out interest balancing or effective persuasion, which led to the decay of authority of the organizers of village political organizations who then resorted to force or abused their power in order to pursue their interests. Thus, the conflict was intensified. The organizers ignored the balance of interests and severely damaged the peasants' interests. Moreover, their incompetence in persuasion caused some peasants to initiate non-institutional political participation. This situation should be well noticed and effectively handled. Otherwise, severe consequences can be foreseen in rural areas.

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Epilogue

The paper before you is my doctoral dissertation titled *Non-institutional Political Participation–A Case Study of Chinese Peasants during the Transformation Period* (which was revised by the editor of this paper from the original title *Study of Chinese Peasants' Political Participation during the Transformation Period*). This paper was completed under the diligent guidance of my supervisor, Professor Xiao Chaoran, and with the help of teachers of the School of International Studies of Peking University, especially the support and encouragement given by Professor Jin Kaicheng and Professor Wang Huning during the writing and publication of this paper.

When my writing came to an end, I suddenly realized that along with it was the conclusion of my academic education. I had always believed that one's educational background does not necessarily reflect the knowledge one has obtained, and that there are many access points to knowledge outside of school. But in school one can get a sense of belonging and enjoy the atmosphere of face-to-face exchanges, which drew me back to Peking University after working for many years after obtaining my bachelor's degree.

During my almost ten years of study at Peking University, I have been greatly impressed by its motto of diligence, precision, factualism, and innovation, and its pursuit of democracy, freedom, and equality. I have also learned much from the teachers who can be characterized as sincere, loyal, and down-to-earth. They stick to their own principles with magnanimity; they can face up to hard tasks and finish them.

Unlike others, I find myself more perplexed than excited to have a work to be published. I am not afraid of not being able to bear others' comments and even criticism. On the contrary, I would feel very lucky because such remarks would prove that the topics in my paper are interesting and worthy of attention. My "feeling lucky" attitude was acquired when I first entered Peking University from Gu Jiegang, one of the founders of the Doubting Antiquity school. Mr. Gu once said, "The 'luck' that I desire is to be criticized by others, which helps me to realize

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my problems and inadequacy of knowledge, so that I'll do my best to expand it. Although I dream of living a peaceful and stable life, I'm deeply aware that there's no limit to pursuing knowledge. If one day I think I have got enough knowledge, it means I'm degenerating. So I'd like to keep learning instead of exclaiming one day, 'Eureka! I shall stop now'." Furthermore, that I feel perplexed is not because I haven't complied with the old saying, "Don't only uphold the wisdom of the ancients, please have your own thoughts." In fact, since I entered the university, I have been following my teachers' instruction that "being well-read drives creativity" and expanding knowledge through thinking and researching specific issues. However, I am afraid that my profound, subjective feeling for Chinese peasants and the rural areas may lead to an irrational objective understanding of them. Even though I am in my late thirties, it is still difficult for me to fully understand the long-standing and complicated issues regarding peasants and the rural areas. Young people's passions usually overwhelm their rational mind and drive them to insist on their own ideas. Although this can be admirable and at times courageous, both their own time and the time of others are wasted if they cannot provide material worthy of further research. How could they feel at ease?

Unlike the dissertation, only to be reviewed by professors and scholars for a doctoral degree, a dissertation to be published should at least be well-grounded. After passing the dissertation defense, several professors encouraged me to go for publication. Thanks to the recommendation of the editor Han Wufeng, the publisher finally agreed to publish my dissertation. To be honest, what attracted them is not necessarily its academic excellence, but rather its subject matter, which may have indeed aroused the curiosity of readers.

When published, there are several statements I shall make. Speaking of the concept of "well-grounded," in order to make arguments more persuasive, I quoted several real-life examples which are not necessarily the most typical ones. Therefore, it is not expected to make a fair judgment about a particular place simply based on these examples. And scholars should never jump directly to conclusions without gathering and recognizing all the facts. From this perspective, prior to publication I made some revisions to ensure that the people who appear in these examples will not be identified to protect their privacy in both their professional and personal lives. In most cases, the names will remain completely anonymous.

When it comes to the "readers' curiosity to know more," we have always paid close attention to and felt sympathy for the kind, lovely, and respectable peasants, since they are the ones regarded as the most vulnerable. During the transformation period, the authorities are called to listen to the voice of the vulnerable and the poor. Although the voice may be faint and weak, it tells the sentiments of the bottom of society, points out the direction of social progress, and calls upon the driving forces for social development. The authorities must value the kind and goodly nature of the vulnerable, for once their life becomes extremely miserable, their minds will be liberated and bring about strong protests and conflict. Criticism and suppression can never reach the heart of the matter. If conflict is suppressed rather than addressed, it will lead to greater anger among the public. If more efforts are made by the authorities to comfort and bring benefits to the vulnerable,

then conflicts might be resolved. Fairness and justice cannot be achieved without thinking rationally and wisely. Conflicts will be addressed neither by violence nor by anger. It is intelligence, sympathy, and more importantly, mutual understanding, mutual respect, and unity that truly resolve conflict. Of course, the status gap between the vulnerable and the authorities will never disappear. However, their respective individuality should be viewed as equal. Only when this is achieved can our society develop harmoniously, and with more effort, the united contribution of the vulnerable and the authorities will surely boost social development. Non-institutional political participation can be found everywhere in China's rural areas during the social transformation period. Social changes are what provide the greatest opportunities for participation and pose the greatest challenges for the instigators of social change and the arbitrators of the social justice. How should we deal with these challenges? The basic principle is to consider the mutual control between citizens and the government when finding solutions to related problems.

"Non-institutional political participation" is an important political phenomenon in China during the transformation period. The political life provides rich resources of study and experimental subjects for the localization of political studies. China's political studies should offer sufficient, convincing explanations for China's various political phenomena and provide effective academic support to China's politics. Now, with many conflicts, challenges and opportunities brought by globalization to China's political life, as well as with the profound changes from the fundamental transformation of the national economic system and growth trajectory, China's scholars of political studies should take determined responsibility to fulfill the task at hand. Politics is closely related to real life, while the latter needs interpretation from political theories. We scholars must stick to the dominating theories of China's social ideology, learn from the treasures of traditional political culture, study and borrow from the advantages of other political theories, set both the national interests and the people's interests as our priorities, and free our minds to make innovations based on China's conditions and political realities. By doing these, we will surely develop China's politics independently and soundly.

Recently, while reading some memoires, I felt warm and touched. As these articles were mostly written by college students in the mid-1980s, they triggered my memories. I think memories are always imprinted with a certain era. Young men always look forward. If one often looks back to his past, it means he is growing out of youth. If someone lives his life by remembering his past, it means he is aging. When I cleaned my house earlier this year, I reread my reading notes from my university years and was overwhelmed by the nostalgia of my more youthful days. "Landscapes in my hometown are wonderful, and even overshadow the West Lake which many ancient poets hailed in their lines." "My parents taught me to be kind, tolerant and optimistic." I was overwhelmed by these diary entries, especially by the entry written on January 29, 1984, "I should always keep in mind that I'm from a peasant family. I love my family, the beautiful landscapes and the villagers in my hometown. On a wider scale, I love the peasants, my motherland and

my fellow countrymen." That's why I still call myself "an old peasant" even up until now. These entries have reflected those simple yet endearing thoughts in me.

I love my family and have taken pride in the heroic death of my grandpa's younger brother since I was a child. I came to know the story when I once engaged in ancestor worship with my father, Fang Shulin, during which I asked "how did my younger grandpa die?"Although he told the tragedy in a plain voice, I vaguely felt that this story was closely related to my family culture and was a reflection of the born kindness of peasants.

I got more details from my mother Hong Guilian: One year, when my younger grandpa was hoeing on a steep hillside, he suddenly saw a giant rock rolling down. Fearing that the big rock would hit villagers down at the foot of the hill, he, seemingly insane, dashed toward the tumbling rock. He had attempted to stop or divert the rock, but unfortunately fell down the hill with it. He died in his thirties, unmarried and with no children. His tomb was looked after by my father and my siblings.

My father, always one to smile, is a kind and generous person. He was nicknamed Folinge by the villagers, or literally Buddha Fang Shulin Brother. I can still remember that in my childhood, Father often told Mother to first serve the beggars if they came at meal time. The food rations for my family were not enough to feed us, not to mention the beggars. We did not understand why he gave food to beggars, but he always told us, "if they had any other alternatives, they would not leave home and beg." In my childhood, I was taught by my parents to have dignity, to be tolerant and to have a mind of "accepting it as it is." I did not quite understand it then, but as I grew wiser, I felt increasingly influenced by these instructions. They taught me to deal with people and incidents calmly whether I found myself in favorable or difficult conditions. My understanding may be explained by several lines in Chinese ancient works, such as "one shall neither take delight in things, nor be saddened by personal losses," "the contented man meets no disgraces; he who knows when to stop runs into no danger," and "neither riches nor honors can corrupt him; neither poverty nor humbleness can make him swerve from principle; and neither threats nor forces can subdue him." My warm and harmonious family saved us, who were still children then, from the evils, cunning ways and hypocrisy of society. Although I went to school one and a half years later than my peers as I had to look after my younger brother, I learned to be kind and responsible from that period. What I got from my peasant family was an inexhaustible spiritual wealth.

I am especially grateful to my wife Wang Liping. She gave me a happy, urban family: her parents and other family members have given me endless love and support. They reassured and brought hope to me when I was helpless or in difficult times. They encouraged and spurred me on when I got lost or tended to slack off. Liping never puts pressure on me for pursuing fame, wealth, or higher social status. The only thing she requires of me is to be a person with a clear conscience who works earnestly and strives to be beneficial to society. Although she looks delicate, she is of great perseverance and resilience. She supports my principles in life: strive to be a good person instead of a writing robot; choose to be an ordinary

person rather than a government official; and try to be a hardworking official rather than a nominal one. A person should work hard and improve himself before becoming successful and share it with others after he succeeds. A person should try to improve himself, which is the noblest thing in the world, endeavoring to be a kind, ordinary, honest, and responsible person of principle with pragmatic spirit.

The moment when I passed the doctoral dissertation defense, I was so excited that I could not help but tear up. The tears expressed my appreciation for the helpful instruction from my family, teachers, classmates, colleagues, and leaders during my formative years. Thanks to Ms. Yu Shujing, I could skip a grade and a half in primary school to catch up with my classmates under her special care in a very short time. Due to the strict educational guidance of Song Yushui and Fang Gongkou, my teachers in junior high school, I was admitted to a key provincial senior high school. By virtue of the help of Xu Baide, one of the outstanding teachers at the provincial level, I was enrolled in a university. My special thanks should also go to my university classmates, who greatly encouraged me upon graduation, especially two classmates (a boy and a girl), natives of Beijing. They gave me advice on the way of living in a city. The boy left a message that "Fang, you are a simple and pure person. You are not sophisticated or opportunistic; nor will you bother others or lie. This may hinder you to live a better life in a city. My friend, learn to be a citizen." The girl said "learn to survive in this city." Fortunately, I have met many nice people such as wise elders, kind teachers, warm-hearted colleagues, and honest friends during those dozen years after graduation, no matter where I am, which situation I am in, and whether I am a journalist or a researcher. It is these good people who have helped me to have good health and to live freely without changing my pure yet upright and outspoken personality. Their support, instruction, and education have filled my life with sunshine. Here, I want to extend thanks to them and try my best to be a good person and work hard in return.

Jiangshan Fang
August 19, 2000